A STUDY OF WILLIAM BLAKE'S JERUSALEM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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PREFACE.

The direction which Blake criticism has taken in recent years has generally been a healthy one. It is seldom wise to underestimate the degree of premeditated design in the work of any of our major poets, or to isolate a poet from the age which produced him, and which determined his central concerns. Much has been done to redress the tendency to make both mistakes in earlier Blake criticism, and this thesis attempts to contribute further towards that aim.

There seems little reason to suppose that the question of influence should be any more clear-cut in poetry than in any other aspect of life. Influences, even if conscious, may be scattered and fragmented. The influence of Ezekiel on Blake is one which needs to be pieced together to clarify Blake's attitudes to the Biblical prophet, revealing at times their unity of purpose, and at others, the mental warfare of contraries.

In the text of this thesis, the place of publication of works cited is London, unless otherwise stated. References to Blake's text are to D.V.Erdman's edition. The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, New York, 1965, referred to hereafter as Erdman.

Any piece of writing emphasizes the extent of one's debt to others, both in terms of creative dialogue, and in terms of specific guidance. In the preparation of this thesis, I wish to acknowledge the consistent helpfulness of the Staff of the Library of the University of Edinburgh, and of the National Library of Scotland. My gratitude also goes to Dr. MacDonald Emslie, Mr. Milos Ivanis, and Mr. Frank Parisi, for their generous encouragement and wise suggestions. My main debt, however, both in the planning and execution of the thesis, is to my supervisor, Dr. Michael Phillips, and it is my central purpose in this preface to record, with very much gratitude, the kindness and constant encouragement of his friendship, and to acknowledge the extent to which this thesis took shape and developed with his patient advice and wise guidance.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

I approach Blake's Jerusalem in the light of the two main traditions in which it is found: the Biblical prophetic tradition, and the English epic tradition. After a general introduction, setting forth the terms of reference of the thesis, and outlining my method of approach, my second chapter contains a statement identifying the texts of the poem, and a chronological review and assessment of previous criticism. In the third and fourth chapters, I discuss the poem in terms of its contexts of epic design and of Biblical prophecy. The central section of the thesis, the fifth chapter reviews some of the major eighteenth century studies of the Book of Ezekiel, which may have influenced Blake's reading of the book, and examines the extent of its similarities with Jerusalem under the headings of situation, structure and stylistic features. This discussion of the poem leads to a close reading of the complete poem in the sixth chapter, showing the depth and coherence of Blake's design.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

The London Magazine for September, 1820, promised its readers, in a jocular piece by T.G. Wainewright, an account of a "newly discovered illuminated manuscript, which has to name 'Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion'." The failure of the promised account to appear was a loss, not only to readers of The London Magazine, and to ourselves, but perhaps also to Blake himself, for Jerusalem has never enjoyed a large measure of critical acclaim or acceptance. From its earliest appearance the poem has suffered from two fundamental criticisms. On the one hand, it has been charged with being undisciplined, fragmented and obscure, if not, in Southey's words, "perfectly mad", and on the other hand, with standing outside any tradition in literary history which might provide a framework for it.

Eliot, like Yeats before him,[1] saw self-indulgence and confusion in Blake's later poetry because of his lack of "a framework of accepted and traditional ideas", a "framework of mythology and theology and philosophy" which

[1] "William Blake", Academy, 51 (1897), 634--35.

"is one of the reasons why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius." [1] The increasing critical attention paid to Blake's later poetry in recent years has not significantly altered this view. Ifor Evans is not being idiosyncratic when he writes in his revised and expanded edition of A Short History of English Literature, with regard to Blake's prophetic books, that:

> As a prophet, and a liberator of the human spirit, Blake is of first importance, but as an artist he is limited by his arbitrary methods, and by an absence of discipline. To disregard tradition completely is the most dangerous course any artist can pursue. Whatever has been gained by our predecessors has been hardly won, and the mental anarchy, which lays it in ruins in order to build the new Jerusalem in its place, smacks of the sin which Lucifer shared with little Bethel. [2]

The point has often been made before, and much more forcefully and specifically as early as 1876 by H.G. Hewlett in his essays in The Contemporary Review. [3] Its adoption and promotion by lesser critics than Hewlett led Yeats to attack "the kind of thing which has been accepted these last twenty years for Blake scholarship", which "treats the prophetic books with amused patronage, and dismisses them with the shallow remark about their formlessness,

[1] "Blake", The Sacred Wood, 1920.

[2] 1970, p.62.

[3] 18 (1876), 756--84 and 29 (1877), 207--28.

which we all know so well, and chatters about their unintelligibility".[1] This thesis attempts, first, to trace the directions which criticism of Jerusalem has taken, second, to show that the poem stands within the context of traditional poetic, mythological and theological frameworks, and third, to provide a reading of the poem which will demonstrate not only its intelligibility but also the depth of the coherence of Blake's design, and the positive achievement of his poetry.

I have included a short statement identifying the texts of Jerusalem and justifying my use of the Morgan copy as used by D.V. Erdman in his edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake.[2] Although aware of the textual problems, establishment of the text is not one of my primary concerns in the thesis. I have, however, briefly elaborated on a suggestion which may help to explain the unresolved question of Blake's rearrangement of the order of the plates in the Harvard and Mellon copies of the poem.

The increasing number of studies of Jerusalem, and the wider range of views on the poem which they inevitably bring, made it desirable to seize the opportunity

[1] Review of Laurence Housman's The Writings of William Blake, Bookman, 4 (1893), 146--47.

[2] New York, 1965.

of reviewing previous criticism while this remained possible in anything approaching both a comprehensive and concise form. It is a review and assessment of criticism specifically on Jerusalem rather than on Blake's later poetry in general, and attempts to reveal the major trends in interpretation of the poem, and to distinguish the main critical approaches. It also traces some of the contexts in which the poem has been viewed, including the epic, prophetic, and esoteric traditions, as well as the more common view that the poem is noteworthy for its lack of a tradition. As my review reveals, charges of unintelligibility have persisted but become increasingly difficult to maintain. Charges of formlessness and of poetic ugliness are more frequent, and are often unspoken assumptions underlying many attacks on the prophetic books.

Increasing recognition of the poem's coherence has come with the awareness that its contexts are the traditions of epic poetry, particularly the English epic, and of Biblical prophecy; traditions which gradually came together until they merged most completely in Paradise Lost, a fusion which Blake attempted to recapture in Jerusalem. By way of introduction to my study of Jerusalem and of its relationship to the Book of Ezekiel, I have briefly attempted to place the poem within these two important traditions, to provide a context for my study of the poem. This part of the thesis traces

Blake's desire to write a national religious epic following Milton, his sense of calling and of prophetic responsibility, his search for an integrating mythology, without the destructive dualisms of the spiritual and the physical, of soul and body, and of grace and nature, and finally his attempt both to identify himself with and bring sanity to the popular millenarian speculation of his time.

The central subject of the thesis is a study of the relationship between Jerusalem and the Book of Ezekiel. To facilitate this, I discuss the two books under the headings of situation, structure, and imagery and language, attempting at the same time not to isolate each aspect from the others. Before developing this study of poetic influence, I have outlined some of the more influential attitudes to Ezekiel's book in the eighteenth century, which may well have coloured Blake's reading and interpretation of it. With regard to the similarities between the two books, I have examined the extent to which Blake identified himself with Ezekiel in terms of his own situation in contemporary society, the situation to which he addresses his work, and his approach to his poem. This identification is clear too in the poet's sense of how much depends on his work in national terms, with the danger of total assimilation of a people into their environment.

This study of Jerusalem and Ezekiel grew out of an attempt to discover whether Jerusalem possesses a unifying principle in the sense of a formal structural organization which would provide a way into reading and understanding the poem. The structure of Jerusalem was, then, the starting-point of the thesis, because I was unhappy with all attempts so far to analyse the poem's organization. Those critics who have attempted to isolate a structure from the poem as a whole, and whose work I have reviewed in the part of the thesis which deals with the structure, have done so only by failing to see how resistant Jerusalem has proved to be to their impositions. The wisest starting-point for my own study of the structure proved to be Harold Bloom's suggestions in his commentary to Erdman's edition, developed in a later essay,[1] that there is a "broad pattern of resemblance" between the two books, and that the Book of Ezekiel may have served as a model for Jerusalem in the same way that "Paradise Lost was the model for The Four Zoas, and Paradise Regained for Milton." [2] Bloom provides helpful general correspondences between Jerusalem's four chapters and what he sees as the four sections of Ezekiel's book. Here Bloom follows traditional views of Ezekiel which see it as composed of four distinct thematic sections.

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy", Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

[2] Erdman, p. 843.

My discussion of the structure of Jerusalem involves both a chapter by chapter analysis, and a larger view of the progression within the poem. In this I have tried not to abstract a structure from the poem's central concerns, but to see it as an integral part of its underlying themes, repeated episodes, narrative progression, dialectical movement, and recurring images, symbols, allusions, and summaries, and in doing so I lay the foundation for my attempt later in the thesis to present a new reading of the poem and a new interpretation of its basic concerns. An important part of this section is my attempt to answer W.H. Stevenson's claim that Jerusalem requires a deus ex machina, by showing what motivates Albion's resurrection and how Blake prepares carefully for the historical progression of his narrative.

The final section of the comparison between Jerusalem and Ezekiel examines stylistic similarities between them. A major theme of this section is my attempt to challenge the almost universally accepted view that the poetry of Jerusalem is harsh, noisy, and ugly, and to present a more accurate view of Blake's poetic achievement.

Analysis of the relationship between Jerusalem and Ezekiel develops, finally, into a reading of the poem which builds on the earlier chapters of the thesis. It must be emphasized that I have dealt primarily with the

text of the poem, though not without reference to the designs in their relationship to the text. As F.R. Leavis points out in justifying his own concern with Blake as poet rather than as artist, in a recent essay, "'Technique' in an art of language is necessarily so different a kind of thing from technique in any of the visual arts that one doesn't expect a critic who is qualified for intelligent discussion of the engravings and paintings to be very helpfully articulate about the poetry - the inverse of which proposition is equally true. Further, the nature of Blake's genius and of his importance to us favours adequate discussion very much more in terms of the poetry than in terms of line, colour, and visual design." [1] My own concern in this thesis is similarily with the poetry of Jerusalem and what it reveals about the nature of Blake's genius in his most "consolidated & extended Work".

[1] "Justifying One's Valuation of Blake", William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. M.D. Paley and Michael Phillips, Oxford, 1973, pp. 66--85, p.67.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Text of "Jerusalem".

Jerusalem exists in six known copies printed by Blake himself, as well as three posthumous copies, and one other unlocated and perhaps also posthumous copy. In referring to these copies, I follow D.V. Erdman's designation of each according to its location, in his essay, "The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's Jerusalem." [1]

Like Milton, the title-page of Jerusalem is dated 1804, though none of the extant copies was printed before 1818, as is clear from the evidence of watermarks. Erdman suggests that "The title-page dates mean that Blake had at least planned these two epics by 1804," and that he may have etched the title-page at this time, although "The plates of text . . . employ exclusively the conventional post-1805 g and . . . cannot safely be dated earlier." [2] In fact, Erdman finds that "Biographical and historical allusions in Jerusalem . . . range in date from 1804 to 1814 or 1815

[1] Studies in Bibliography, xvii (1964), 1, n.1.

[2] ibid., pp. 7 - 8, n.8, and p.54. Erdman finds that Blake employed a small 'g', "with its serif or topknot on the left side instead of the right" (op.cit., p.52) throughout the period 1791 to 1805, which he then "as suddenly and with ruthless consistency discarded." In his more detailed examination of the theory in his article, "Dating Blake's Script: the 'g' hypothesis," Blake Newsletter, Vol.3, No.1 (June 1969), 8, Erdman more specifically dates the change from left to righthand serif as "the 16 month interval" between Vol.II of Hayley's Cowper, November 1802, and Vol.III, March 1804.

(the end of the war) and suggest a much later date of composition for most of that poem." [1] This is borne out by Blake's references in his letter to William Hayley, 27 November 1805, in which he writes of how Cromek has set him to engrave his illustrations for Robert Blair's The Grave, a project which was to occupy much of Blake's attention, and as Erdman again points out, "by the time he and Cromek separated Blake's attention must have been absorbed by preparations for the extremely ambitious Exhibition of 1809." [2] In evidence of this Erdman points to Blake's letter to George Cumberland, 19 December 1808, in which he writes: "I am very much obliged by your kind ardour in my cause, & should immediately Engage in revising my former pursuits of printing if I had not now so long been turned out of the old channel into a new one, that it is impossible for me to return to it without destroying my present course."

[1] ibid., p.8, n.8. In his letter to Thomas Butts, 25 April 1803, Blake describes "the Spiritual Acts" of his three year residence at Felpham, where he "composed an immense number of verses on One Grand Theme, similar to Homer's Iliad or Milton's Paradise Lost," an account which Erdman suggests (op.cit., p.8, n.8.) "fits Milton better than Vala or Jerusalem." However Milton, as we know it, can hardly be referred to as "an immense number of verses," and it may be better to see Blake's claim as a rather idealistic reference to Vala, or, as Frye suggests, as a reference to an early form of Milton as a 'diffuse' epic, after the form of Paradise Lost. (Fearful Symmetry, Princeton, 1947, p.314).

[2] ibid., p.8, n.8.

However Blake did return very shortly after this to his "old channel," his "present course" having ended only in disappointment after the failure of his 1809 Exhibition, and Erdman is again surely right in suggesting that "he must first have turned his attention to the etching and printing of Milton, for it is to this work that he alludes in his 'Public Address' . . . as "a Poem . . . which I will soon Publish.'" [1]

The printing of Jerusalem, then, began in 1818, and that year saw the completion of Chapters 1 and 2 of both the British Museum copy and the Rinder copy, and of Chapter 1 of the Cunliffe copy. From 1818 to 1820 Blake completed Chapters 3 and 4 of the British Museum and Rinder copies, both printed in black, and foliated by Blake himself, 1--100. The Cunliffe copy exists only as Chapter 1 of the poem. Two more copies of the poem, the Harvard and the Mellon copies, are extant on paper watermarked 1820, but as Erdman points out, "Nothing indicates the relative positions of the Harvard and Mellon copies." [2]

[1] ibid., p.9, n.8. Blake's reference to this poem as "concerning my Three years Herculean Labours at Felpham," (Public Address, Page 51), is a description which fits Milton more adequately than any other of his poems.

[2] ibid., p.40.

It is in these two copies however; the Harvard, printed in black, and the Mellon, printed in orange, that we have Blake's rearrangement of the order of the plates in Chapter 2 of the poem, arranged (taking the British Museum and Rinder copies as standard) 28, 43--46, 29--37, 42, 38--41, 47--50, the arrangement which Geoffrey Keynes adopts in his edition of The Writings of William Blake.[1] However, for the Morgan copy, for which "The watermarked paper of 1824 and 1826 . . . remains the only specific evidence that it is the latest of the five," [2] Blake returned to his earlier arrangement of the poem in the British Museum and Rinder copies.

In his edition of The Letters of William Blake,[3] Geoffrey Keynes adds his own note to Blake's claim in his letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827, that: "The Last Work I produced is a Poem Entitled Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion, but find that to Print it will Cost my Time the amount of Twenty Guineas, One I have Finish'd. It contains 100 Plates but it is not likely that I shall get a Customer for it." The reference, as Keynes no doubt correctly claims, is to

[1] 3 Vols., 1925.

[2] Erdman, op.cit., p.40.

[3] Second edition, 1968.

"the unique coloured copy of Jerusalem now in the Paul Mellon collection." [1] This would mean that despite having returned to his earlier arrangement for the Morgan copy, Blake's rearrangement of the plates in 1820 for the Harvard and Mellon copies was still acceptable to him in 1827. There may, on the other hand, be evidence for a preference for the earliest arrangement in Blake's return to it for his latest extant copy, and in support of this Erdman adds that "Blake took more pains to make the text legible in the Morgan copy than in the Mellon."[2]

It has been suggested by Michael Phillips that Blake's reasons for rearranging the order of the plates in the Mellon copy, printed in orange, may have been primarily visual, to enhance the appearance of the book for the purposes of finding, in Blake's own words, "a Customer for it." [3] Examining the rearranged plates with this in mind, though doubtless a matter for personal taste, there would appear to be two main benefits in favour of the rearrangement. The beautiful designs on Plates 28 and 46 (again taking the British Museum and Rinder copies as standard), have increased, and in the case of Plate 46, greatly increased prominence. In addition the rather ugly juxtaposition of Plates 46 and 47

[1] ibid., p.163.

[2] Erdman, op.cit., p.41.

[3] Letter to George Cumberland, 12 April 1827.

is avoided, the juxtaposition of Plates 41 and 47 being as much of an improvement as the coherence of the text would allow. These two reasons provide compelling evidence for taking the suggestion of improved visual appearance seriously. Jerusalem as a whole, in the earlier copies, reveals a large degree of balance between text and design. It may well have been the case that Blake discovered that the text of the second chapter lent itself to rearrangement without losing coherence, and took advantage of this for the aesthetic reasons I have suggested.

At the same time, it would seem wise to adopt Erdman's claim in his essay that "Perhaps the soundest conclusion is that Blake found both sequences attractive but considered neither definitive." [1] The balance of the evidence, however, would suggest that the best course is to use the arrangement of the Morgan copy, as Erdman does in his edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake,[2] the copy in which Blake returned to the order of his earlier arrangement.

[1] Erdman, op.cit., p.40.

[2] New York, 1965.

2. A Chronological Review and Assessment of Previous Criticism of 'Jerusalem'.

In this summary of previous criticism of Jerusalem, I have limited my review to those works which speak directly of Jerusalem, rather than including general discussions of Blake's poetry. I have omitted studies of the structure of the poem at this stage, for a review of these is included in the later section of this thesis which examines the structure and design of Jerusalem.[1]

The aim of the review is to disclose the general directions in which opinion concerning Jerusalem has moved since Allan Cunningham's remarks on the obscurity and extravagance of Blake's later books in The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects.[2] In tracing these directions, this review attempts to be comprehensive without being exhaustive. The proliferation of essays on Blake's later poetry in general, and Jerusalem in particular, in learned journals and collections of essays in recent years, has precluded a study of all that has been written on the poem.

[1] These include studies of the structure of Jerusalem by Karl Kiralis, E.J. Rose, Joanne Witke, Anne Mellor and Harold Bloom.

[2] Vol.II, 1830, pp. 140--79.

Cunningham set a pattern which was to reappear constantly in the works of succeeding critics when he wrote of the dichotomy of the Blake of the lyrical poems, poems which are natural and lucid, full of "simplicity and pathos", and the Blake of the later books, which are "unmeaning, mystical and extravagant", whose "crowning defect is obscurity".[1] The writer for the London University Magazine in 1830, in his essay, "The Inventions of William Blake, Painter and Poet",[2] is much more sympathetic to Blake's prophetic books, without being more elucidating: "Every genius has a certain end to perform, and always runs before his contemporaries, and for that reason is not generally understood."[3]

Alexander Gilchrist's biography of Blake,[4] the result of a visit to London during which he saw a number of Blake's designs and engravings, was begun primarily to vindicate Blake from some of the more extreme opinions which saw in the prophetic books evidence of the poet's madness. However, Gilchrist,

[1] Cunningham, op.cit., p.181.

[2] No.II (March 1830), 318--23.

[3] ibid., p.318.

[4] Life of William Blake, "Pictor Ignotus," 1863.

while vehemently defending Blake from the charge of madness, falls back upon what Miss Deborah Dorfman rightly calls "vague or apologetic generalities" when speaking of Jerusalem.[1] Having been neglected by the public, Blake in Gilchrist's view, is no longer concerned with communication in Jerusalem, and pours forth his conceptions "all crude and inchoate," taking the form of "dark oracles, words empty of meaning to all but him who uttered them." The poetry is shapeless and undisciplined, but amid all its contradictions and incoherences, Gilchrist points to the "cornerstone of his philosophy"; that "the conceptions of the mind are the realities of realities, that the human imagination is an eternal world." Gilchrist sees in Jerusalem little resemblance to the earlier prophetic books. It is "an allegory in which the lapse of the human race from a higher spiritual state, and its struggles towards a return to such, are the main topics," mostly written in prose, occasionally in metrical prose, but rarely in verse. The characters often tend to be "mere names", not even shadows.

Swinburne follows Gilchrist both in seeing in the later books a lack of mental discipline, and in accepting Cunningham's dichotomy of the lucid lyrical Blake

[1] Blake in the Nineteenth Century, New Haven, 1969, p.149.

and the obscure prophet, in his study, William Blake: A Critical Essay,[1] where he writes that "The lyrical faculty had gained and kept a preponderance over all others visible in every scrap of his work." Jerusalem is a "noisy and misty land" composed in "the stormiest excitement," in which "the spirit of the work is too strong and its form too faulty for any rule or line." Where Swinburne is most helpful is in revealing the purpose which exists alongside the power, the meaning along with the mystery, and for this he points us to Blake's saturation of his thoughts and senses in the forms of the English Bible. From this there derived not only the "bewildering catalogues" and the "insane cosmogony," but also a delight in the sound and shape of words and phrases, a "fervent imitation of style", and a "special force and supreme occasional loveliness or grandeur in expression."[2] Both text and design show a blend of delicacy and vigorous dramatic insight, of strength and sureness of touch in colour and outline.

Miss Dorfman suggests that the tendency of the mid-nineteenth century critics "was less to expand and sharpen interpretation through mutual debate than to use Blake to reinforce the solidarity of a coterie position,"[3]

[1] 1868.

[2] ibid., p.231.

[3] Dorfman, op.cit., p.168.

undoubtedly with Swinburne in mind, who finds similarities between Blake and Whitman which reveal much about Swinburne's own aesthetic and political views. Blake, like Whitman, is a "passionate preacher of sexual or political freedom." "Both are spiritual and both democratic; both by their works recall, even to so untaught and tentative a student as I am, the fragments vouchsafed to us of the Pantheistic poetry of the East."[1] Blake is presented as the poet of rebellion against conventional values and the prophet of sexual liberty and Pantheistic mysticism. His apparent madness is the result of his heightened artistic sensitivity and perception.

Although he finds an underlying consistency in Blake's thought, based on his belief in man's progressive liberation and movement towards his own apotheosis, a consistency expressed most clearly in his most unified book, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Swinburne cannot find the same unity in Jerusalem. As a "fervent apocalyptic discourse," it is uneven, with too much that is obscure and ugly, its "clamour and confusion" at times redeemed by the poet's passion and the poem's moments of lyrical beauty.

Swinburne's Blake is a man isolated in his age, a

[1] Swinburne. op.cit., p.301.

man of "mist and fire" among "small customs and competitions"; a poet of prophetic fervour in a time of critical reasoning. The value of Swinburne's essay for my present discussion lies mainly in his attempt to show that despite its formlessness and difficulty, Jerusalem possesses both meaning and poetic quality, and that we must look in the direction of Blake's passionate study of the Bible to discover both.

James Thomson and James Smetham[1] add little to an understanding of the prophetic books, apart from Thomson's rather hopeful comment that they may well prove to be "much less wild and incoherent than even Mr. Gilchrist supposed." He adds rather unhelpfully that "every man living in seclusion and developing an intense interior life, gradually comes to give a quite peculiar significance to certain words and phrases and emblems."[2]

Much more thorough and detailed is Henry G. Hewlett's attack on Blake in his essay "Imperfect Genius: William Blake,"[3] in which he finds Blake to be lacking in some

[1] "B.V.," "The Poems of W. Blake," National Reformer, N.S. VII (1866), 22--23, 42--43, 52--54, 70--71. James Smetham, "Art.I. Life of William Blake," London Quarterly Review, XXXI (1869), 265--311.

[2] Thomson, op.cit., p.258.

[3] The Contemporary Review, 18 (1876), 756--84, and 19 (1877), 207--28.

respect, in each of the five qualities necessary for perfect genius; originality or 'freshness of force', fertility, equability or 'maintenance of power', coherence, and articulateness. Although there is much he praises in Blake's early work, the work of the 'poet', rather than the 'prophet', he cannot find any support in the texts for Swinburne's claim of a coherent system in the later books. Blake lacked the distinctness of utterance necessary for great poetry, and what 'loose notions of metaphysics' Blake possessed, he derived from Berkeley. Hewlett sees the influence of Ossian's style on Blake's poetry in its 'profuseness of fulsome epithet, its disjointed method of expression, and perpetual introduction of apostrophe and ejaculation'.[1] Hewlett's essay is both well argued and well documented, and it is hardly surprising that until the Ellis-Yeats edition in 1893,[2] Blake's reputation depended almost solely on his lyrical poems, while the prophetic books, as Miss Dorfman points out, were admired chiefly as art objects, exerting an influence over English Art Nouveau, but seldom read.[3]

In his review of Laurence Housman's Selections

[1] ibid., Vol. 18, p.779.

[2] The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical, ed. E.J. Ellis and W.B. Yeats, 3 vols., 1893.

[3] Dorfman, op.cit., p.190.

from the Writings of William Blake, W.B. Yeats sums up "the kind of thing which has been accepted these last twenty years for Blake scholarship": "It treats the prophetic books with amused patronage, and dismisses them with the shallow remark about their formlessness, which we all know so well, and chatters about their unintelligibility."[1]

In tracing what they call "The System", Ellis and Yeats positively assert the coherence of Blake's thought in the later books, and thereby lay the groundwork for a serious study of them. Their well known statement about the form of Jerusalem, that its arrangement is that of a scrap-book, is elucidated later in their discussion of the story of Reuben. Blake's visions, we are told, came to him "in irregular flashes", so that we are surprised at the degree of continuity which the poem reveals, sufficient to make the whole intelligible.[2] Blake's problem, Yeats tells us in his "Academy Portrait",[3] was that he "was a man crying out for a mythology," who could find no living ties with the traditional religious or Celtic mythologies.

Ellis and Yeats were the first critics both to

[1] "The Writings of William Blake," Bookman, IV (1893), 146--47.

[2] Ellis and Yeats, op.cit., Vol.I, p.381.

[3] Academy, 51 (1897), 634--35.

explicate many of the minute particulars of Blake's fourfold mythology, and to attempt to find the underlying structure of the poem. The four chapters are seen in terms of the four states of Creation, Redemption, Judgment and Regeneration respectively. Above all it is Blake's religion of Art, his gospel of the Imagination, delivering man from that state of eternal death which is to be absorbed in what is temporary, which attracts Yeats. The Blake of the Ellis-Yeats edition is very much the Blake of the late nineteenth century aesthete.

The attempt of Ellis and Yeats to reveal the comprehensibility of both the minute particulars of Jerusalem and its unifying structure, bore little fruit in the work of their immediate successors. In their edition of Jerusalem,[1] E.R.D. MacLagan and A.G.B. Russell draw heavily for their introduction on Ellis and Yeats, referring to Jerusalem as a storehouse for many of Blake's more important ideas. They do little to direct criticism away from the assumption that the Prophetic Books are confused in their arrangement and full of ungoverned passion. Precisely this view is put forward in Basil de Selincourt's William Blake,[2] a study which concentrates on the lyric poetry, but which finds the rest of Blake's

[1] In the Series, The Prophetic Books of William Blake, 1904.

[2] 1909.

work "indeliberate, unconscious, fragmentary," too much the record of the turmoil and confusion, the agony and wrestlings of Blake's internal struggles. Alan Clutton-Brock, in his essay "Blake's Jerusalem,"[1] finds that by the time he came to write Jerusalem, Blake was "yielding to the impulse of expression, unchecked by any exercise of the critical faculty." Clutton-Brock does not find that imaginative identity of idea and image which Blake sought, for "the symbolising mind is always in danger of forgetting the idea in the image." The image of Blake as the "intellectual drunkard" of Lytton Strachey's essay, "The Poetry of Blake,"[2] persisted, though John Cowper Powys did much to redress the balance in his essay, "William Blake", in Suspended Judgments.[3] However, in defending Blake as a poet of genius, Powys directs his attention to the lyrical poems rather than to the 'Apocalyptic Oracles' of the later years.

While adding little that is new to our understanding of Jerusalem, Arthur Symon's study, William Blake,[4] is helpful in revealing the direction in which criticism of the poem has been moving. On the one hand there is still little concensus as to the form of the poem.

[1] Speaker, N.S. XI (1904), 38--39.

[2] Independent Review, IX (1906), 215--26.

[3] Suspended Judgments, New York, 1916, pp.257--75.

[4] 1907.

Following Swinburne's lead, Symons claims that it has "a rhythm of fine oratory," comparable to Biblical prose, but he sets the voice of the orator over against the voice of the poet, for as a poem, Jerusalem remains very much the "noisy and misty land" that Swinburne found. With regard to the comprehensibility of the poem, Symons follows the tracks laid by Ellis and Yeats. It is "Blake's most serious attempt to set his myth in order; to create, in Yeats's words, 'a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame'." Symons finds it easier to say what Blake is protesting against, in the form of spiritual death, generalising art and science, the spread of doubt and negation, and the claim of "the indefinite Spectre, who is the Rational power," to divinity, than to present a coherent understanding of Blake's vision.

Mention must be made at this stage of John Sampson's edition of The Poetical Works of William Blake in 1913. Sampson brought to the text, as did Geoffrey Keynes in his edition of The Writings of William Blake twelve years later, both accuracy and insight. Although Sampson's concern was basically with the lyrical poems, he desired 'to present within the compass of a single volume the main body of his poetry, comprehending under this term not only the purely lyrical poems, but also those written in irregular unrimed verse or rhythmed prose.'[1]

[1] Sampson, op.cit., Bibliographical Introduction, p.xv.

He recognizes that 'in Jerusalem even more than in Milton, we meet with the complete statement of Blake's fully developed system of mythology.' [1]

Denis Saurat provides an early and very positive approach to the relationship between the poetry of Blake and Milton in his study Blake and Milton.[2] He finds many points of contact between the two poets, a "remarkable similarity of mind and temperament,"[3] to explain the direct influence of Milton on Blake. Milton achieved Blake's great aim, to write a national religious epic, and his poetry exhibits masculine qualities which attracted Blake, strength, pride, and metaphysical concern. However, Saurat finds little directly Miltonic influence in Jerusalem, a poem "most obscure to the uninitiated,"[4] the work of a poet who "is a Milton who has broken the bonds of self-control and all control."[5]

T.S. Eliot agrees with Yeats that "what his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas," the failure of an

[1] ibid., p. xliii.

[2] Bordeaux, 1920.

[3] ibid., p.9.

[4] ibid., p.35.

[5] ibid., p.7.

"environment which failed to provide what such a poet needed."[1] Eliot points, however, to Blake's "remarkable and original sense of language and the music of language", and leads us directly to S. Foster Damon's influential work, William Blake; His Philosophy and Symbols,[2] in which he recognises the symphonic qualities of Jerusalem, with its statements of themes, interweaving passages, "emotional sweep and change", and final triumphant apotheosis, as well as its vast breadth and towering structure.

Damon's interpretation of Jerusalem owes little to preceeding critics, due to the lack of detailed attention given to the poem, but his attitude to Milton and Jerusalem is largely a continuation of the pioneering work of Ellis and Yeats: "I firmly believe that the last of Blake's works are his greatest." His aim is to show that in these later books, "Blake's thought was of the clearest and deepest; his poetry of the subtlest and strongest; his painting of the highest and most luminous."[3] In tracing Blake's "very definite system of symbols" and revealing his literary sources, Damon finds that "he

[1] "Blake," The Sacred Wood, 1920, pp. 137--43.

[2] Boston and London, 1924.

[3] ibid., "Introduction."

himself had systematized his thought so carefully that one clue led to another, until at last the general structure of each book was clear." [1]

Damon's book not only provides a detailed commentary on the poem, uncovering much of the significance of its symbols and its major themes, but also attempts to see the poem as a whole in terms of Blake's age, as an epic which grew out of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the emphasis is very firmly on the poet as mystic, tracing his life and work as a progression corresponding precisely to the fivefold "Mystic Way", as defined by Miss Evelyn Underhill in her fundamental study, Mysticism - A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness.[2]

While Jerusalem has "nothing resembling the lyrical quality found so often in The Four Zoas and at times in Milton," Damon finds that it has much of the splendour of

[1] ibid., "Preface."

[2] New York, 1912. The first stage of the "Fivefold Way", the awakening to divine reality, corresponds to the state of innocence in Blake, according to Damon. Purgation of the Self corresponds to experience, and the resulting renewed awareness of the divine, to revolution. The "dark night of the Soul," though largely "passed in silence" by Blake, is evident in the painting of the crucifixion in Jerusalem. Complete union with truth is a return to a wiser state of innocence. Jerusalem, with Plates 15--16 of The Gates of Paradise, is the expression of this fifth stage.

a poem "pitched in a key at once darker and more sublime," as is fitting for a poem of such epic scope. However, Damon's bold and enterprising interpretation of Jerusalem is not without its moments of defensiveness, as in his "Introduction" where he writes that later, Blake "subordinated literary effect to higher aims"; presumably those of arousing his age by the challenge of his thought. Such a view is difficult to reconcile with Blake's own claims for his poem, in his introduction "To the Public", as a thoroughly unified creation.

It is precisely those elements for which Blake, following Milton's introduction to Paradise Lost, claims special merit, the measure and the symbolism of the poem, which D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis in their edition of The Prophetic Writings of William Blake[1] find "instances of vigour and earnestness overreaching themselves and falling into extravagance."[2] The poem is "clogged and broken by the heedless accumulation of unnecessary symbols," devised to express the basic dualism of vision and reason, and is still seen, not as an ordered whole, but as "a congeries of episodes bearing upon the conflict between the Everlasting Gospel and Natural Religion."[3] Although Sloss and Wallis are unable to justify Jerusalem

[1] 2 vols., Oxford, 1926.

[2] ibid., Vol.II, pp. 110--11.

[3] ibid.. Vol.I. p.439.

as a work of artistic merit, their interpretation of the poem contains much that is positive and worthwhile. They write perceptively of the poem's attitude to the position and power of woman, "the supreme manifestation" of the natural universe. As with Arthur and Merlin, man is beguiled into idolatry to her power with "multitudinous illusions of corporeity," while she jealously fetters the will and speciously appeals to pity and chastity, "not physical merely, but intellectual and aesthetic."[1]

In her examination of Blake's poetry "in the light of Croce's aesthetic,"[2] A.E. Powell finds that Blake is at one with Croce in the belief that "the man who cannot execute his vision, does not possess it," but that the failure of his later poetry lies not so much in the lack of a clear and coherent logical structure, as in the fact that it is, in Symon's words, "a record of vision which has not been thoroughly mastered, even as vision." She points to a discrepancy between the "intense use of linear rhythm" in the drawings, and an increasing looseness of metre and indistinctness in the text.

The problem is summed up for us in T.S. Eliot's review of contemporary critical works under the heading "The Mysticism of Blake",[3] where he writes; "Our chief

[1] ibid., Vol.I, p.442.

[2] The Romantic Theory of Poetry, 1926, Chapter III, "Blake," pp. 52--72.

[3] Nation & Athenaum, 41 (1927), 779.

interest . . . in this context, is that we want to make up our minds about the value, as poetry, of the 'prophetic books'," for "Blake was not one man in the Songs and another in the Books: the genius and the inspiration are continuous." Eliot's conclusion is in effect a restatement of Gilchrist's: genius and inspiration are not enough. It is "mental and moral discipline" which Blake lacks.

Two important studies by Denis Saurat[1] and J. Middleton Murry[2] are concerned with expounding the doctrine of Blake's poetry. Saurat unravels some of the intricacies of Blake's mythology, at the same time revealing its essential coherence, in his examination of the influence of gnostic, cabalistic and celtic tradition on Blake's thinking. At the root of his interpretation of Jerusalem is his view that "the conducting thread of this labyrinth is in the legendary history of the Celtic race, as the Celtomaniacs of the eighteenth century imagined it."[3]

In tracing themes of self-annihilation and forgiveness throughout the poem, Murry contributes much to our understanding of it. Blake's personal discoveries of forgiveness and liberation become, he writes,

[1] Blake and Modern Thought, 1929.

[2] William Blake, 1933.

[3] Saurat, op.cit., p.83.

"the impersonal expectation of the world." Blake's Christianity springs from the identity of Self-annihilation and Forgiveness, as constant and immediate experience."[1] Murry also makes the valuable and illuminating observation that compared to the "imaginative tension" of Milton, Jerusalem is remarkably calm: "in its fashion it almost satisfies Wordsworth's condition of poetry-emotion recollected in tranquility."[2]

In his fine study of the sources and meaning of the symbolism of Blake's later writings, William Blake's Circle of Destiny,[3] Milton O. Percival establishes the inner coherence, as well as the traditional sources, of that symbolism. His study is particularly illuminating with regard to the place of the Zoas in the later books, and the importance of fourfoldness in general. He shows how the poet transcends abstract and analytical systematization, in that Blake's "fourfold principle becomes Zoas, personal, living, and even demonic."[4] However, Northrop Frye is right to point out that "the author frequently fails to lay the primary emphasis on the (usually Biblical) source," while paying tribute to the

[1] Murry, op.cit. p.270.

[2] ibid., p.257.

[3] New York, 1938.

[4] ibid., p.9.

growing importance of Percival's study.[1]

The conciseness, as well as the thoroughness, of Percival's book overshadows Edward B. Hungerford's study of the sources of Albion in Blake's prophetic books, in his Shores of Darkness.[2] Hungerford overreacts to the charge of obscurity in Blake's poetry, and presents a rather simplistic view of the poems as expressing the poet's basic conviction of man's need for divine guidance.

Jacob Bronowski, in contrast to Murry, reiterates the more accepted view, that "we must learn to read Blake's prophetic manner, not as poetry, but as rhetoric."[3] Such rhetoric uses imagery to give energy to deliberately slack rhythms, loose phrasing and everyday speech, so that "energy becomes the keyword to Blake's prophetic books."

In seeking sources of Blake's mythology among the speculative mythologists of the eighteenth century, Ruthven Todd, in his essay, "William Blake and the Eighteenth Century Mythologists",[4] prepares the way for an examination of Blake's use of the symbol of Jerusalem in relation to its importance for many of his contemporaries, for whom

[1] The English Romantic Poets and Essayists, ed. C.W. and L.H. Houtchens, New York, 1957.

[2] New York, 1941, pp. 35--62.

[3] A Man Without a Mask, 1943, p.9.

[4] Tracks in the Snow, 1946, pp. 29--60.

it came to signify "the blessed and primitive state of innocent belief."[1]

Mark Schorer, in his William Blake - The Politics of Vision,[2] examines the social application of the twin components of Blake's view of art: religion and politics. Love and equality, the motivating forces of Blake's religion and politics, need the energetic guidance of the artist. Blake's aggressively independent imagination "to the very end . . . allied itself with his equally aggressive social insights."[3] However, despite the intention of Jerusalem as "an effort to overcome all concepts of individual psychology, in social institutions, in national interests and conflicts, in the physical and moral structure of the universe . . . the vast bulk of the poem remains chaotic," writes Schorer. Where Blake, in lyrics such as London or The Sunflower, illuminated facts by vision, in Milton and Jerusalem, vision is overcrammed with facts. Schorer's influential conclusion might be summed up as lamenting the failure of Blake's considerable poetic gifts to find appropriate form and expression in the later books.

[1] ibid., p.55.

[2] New York, 1946.

[3] ibid., p.419.

In the most influential of all studies of Blake's poetry, Fearful Symmetry, A Study of William Blake,[1] Northrop Frye raises the questions of epic design and structure in Jerusalem, subjects which will be examined separately in another part of this thesis. However, the direction in which Frye points for an understanding of Blake's poetry is clear. "It was Milton's function to recreate the form of Christian vision for an English public, and any attempt to continue his tradition will involve a renewed study of his archetype, the Bible." Thus, "in reading Jerusalem there are only two questions to consider: how Blake interpreted the Bible, and how he placed that interpretation in an English context."[2] Frye's study of the poem is an attempt to provide answers to these two questions. Blake's imaginative reading of the Bible reveals it as a "vast cycle of existence from the creation of a fallen world to the recreation of an unfallen one,"[3] and "the function of Jerusalem is to recreate the vision of the Jesus of action, the divine man whose impact miraculously increased the bodily and mental powers of those who saw what he was, in order to bring that impact directly to bear on the English public."[4]

1 Princeton, 1947.

2 ibid., pp. 356--57.

3 ibid., p.389.

4 ibid., p.391.

Frye writes of the poetic manner of Jerusalem that it is analytic in the sense in which Goya is analytic; refusing to paint an impressive appearance over an ugly reality. It is harsh, "continually muttering or howling sinister spells to compel the devil to appear in his true shape." On this point Frye adds little to our appreciation of the poem. In effect, he accepts the censures of previous critics, but finds them irrelevant, for Jerusalem is governed by "a grim resolve to portray experience as it is regardless of its horror."[1] Frye's reading of the poem in terms of its Biblical setting and symbolism, however, is crucial, and sets Blake firmly in the tradition in which he himself wished to be found, as the recreator of the epic vision of Milton, based on a reading of the Bible as vision.

Blake's relationship to Milton is also prominent in Josephine Miles's important and revealing essay, "The Language of William Blake."[2] She finds that Blake's use of language sets him in "the line of scenic and spiritual concern," physically and cosmically descriptive as opposed to that of Tudor humanism or metaphysical or Neo-classic concerns. His use of the modifying power and cumulative effect of nouns and adjectives, and of

[1] ibid., pp. 358--59.

[2] English Institute Essays, 1950, 141--69.

phrasal rather than clausal and reasoning construction, with few verbs of motion, links him with those eighteenth century poets, following Milton and Spenser, whose language is "definable as descriptive, onomatopoetic, invocative and declarative, fond of participles."[1] Indeed, Miss Miles's study is particularly valuable in demonstrating both the continuity of Blake's own use of language, from Poetical Sketches to Jerusalem, and his links with eighteenth century modes of expression, rather than his individuality and uncommonness. What Blake ignored, writes Miss Miles, was "neoclassically smooth generalisation and moral abstraction." "What he faithfully used was its vigour and scope of scene and anatomy, its sublimely vast yet satirically particular emotional survey."[2]

In his essays, "Blake's Treatment of the Archetype",[3] and "Poetry and Design in William Blake",[4] Northrop Frye enlarges upon his earlier analysis of Blake's poetry in Fearful Symmetry, in terms of the dialectical movement of the later poems. The basic contraries are of unfulfilled desire in the world of dream, and the reality of

1 ibid., p.152.

2 ibid., p.164.

3 ibid., pp. 170--95.

4 Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 10 (1951), 35--42.

law in the world of experience. Occupying a mediate position is work or constructive activity, in the form of Los, reshaping reality and to some extent fulfilling desire. As a Christian epic, the "total image" of Jerusalem is the apocalypse, "the vision of reality separated into its eternal constituents of heaven and hell."[1]

Of Blake's "radical form of mixed art" Frye offers several illuminating insights. At times the designs illustrate the text, at others presenting images independently, or commenting ironically on it, focusing and sharpening the verbal symbolism. Usually, though, "the words are left alone to do their own work." The plate as a whole "has a function rather similar to that of the stanza with its final alexandrine in The Faerie Queene: it brings the narrative to a full stop and forces the reader to try to build up from the narrative his own reconstruction of the author's meaning."[2] Without necessarily agreeing completely with Frye, his comparison of the single plate to the Spenserian stanza, with its effect of creating an epic out of single image units, is apt and illuminating.

Joseph Wicksteed's introduction to, and commentary

[1] ibid., p. 42.

[2] English Institute Essays, 1950, p. 185.

on Jerusalem,[1] provides a comprehensive and illuminating introduction to the poem, despite its obvious faults of reading Jerusalem too much in purely autobiographical terms, and attempting too rigid definition of Blake's flexible use of symbols. Wicksteed interprets Jerusalem in terms of "Blake's philosophical idealism",[2] a definition which he employs to refer to Blake's insistence that the world of the poet is the world of values, revealing "the all-comprehending mystery of the human mind and soul." The value of Wicksteed's book lies in its conviction of the coherence of Jerusalem as "an Epic recording the conquest by Christianity of the Pagan eponymous hero and patriarch of our island,"[3] revealing the constant "contrast between the fleeting and the abiding,"[4] an epic based on Blake's fundamental belief that all mankind is at all times ultimately redeemable.

In his influential study of the contemporary frame of reference of Blake's poetry, Prophet Against Empire,[5]

[1] William Blake's 'Jerusalem'. Accompanying volume to the coloured and uncoloured facsimiles of the poem, published by the Trianon Press for The William Blake Trust, 1954.

[2] ibid., p.11.

[3] ibid., p.39.

[4] ibid., p.1.

[5] Princeton, 1954. The second edition of Erdman's book, published in 1969, makes no alteration to the views on Jerusalem which he expresses in the earlier edition.

D.V. Erdman applies those critical principles which he justifies so fully in his essay, "Blake: The Historical Approach."[1] Blake kept his vision always "orientated in time and space": "Time and space were 'Real Beings,' and history was a very real, if 'emblamatic,' texture." The historical context of Jerusalem reveals itself to be concerned with the latter phase of the Napoleonic wars, whose "central prophetic theme is a plea to Albion and his Sons not to pursue the war with France to mutual ruin or to make a vengeful peace that would destroy the freedom and national brotherhood of the two nations."[2]

Erdman adds little to our appreciation of the structure and style of Jerusalem, following Frye almost precisely in finding that "there is not so much orderliness in this 'harsh' poem as the division into four equal chapters might lead us to expect, but there is greater thematic unity than in the earlier epics."[3] Erdman's great contribution is in terms of the theme of the poem, which he describes in terms of war and peace, for which Los chooses illustrative historical events with the motif of "peace without vengeance." The problem posed by the poem is "not simply to dissuade

[1] English Institute Essays, 1950, 197--223.

[2] ibid., pp. 199--200.

[3] Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p.427.

Albion from fighting but to oppose his making a conqueror's peace." Albion's sickness is his despairing belief that he must kill and be killed, and there are frequent echoes of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,[1] with its themes of imperial excess and imperial decline. The creative prophet must water the Tree of Life and encourage the growth of "soft fibres of tender affection",[2] leading to the hymn to the spiritual regeneration of man and nature with which Jerusalem ends.

It is clear at this stage that there is still no concensus of critical opinion as to the poetic qualities of Jerusalem, for in his study, Infinity on the Anvil,[3] Stanley Gardener can still claim, in the face of all the criticism I have reviewed, that "assertions of quality in Jerusalem are unsupported by critical argument, even by quotation. At best from the appreciative commentators we have synopsis and explanation." When we turn to the poem we find, Gardener writes, "only excessive emotion, demonstrative but not draratic."[4]

Hazard Adams, in his essay "The Blakean Aesthetic",[5]

[1] 1776--88.

[2] Jerusalem 90. 9--10.

[3] Oxford, 1954.

[4] ibid., p.152.

[5] Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 13 (1954), 233--48.

and in his book, Blake and Yeats; The Contrary Vision,[1] which expands several of the insights of the earlier essay, examines the contraries which dominate Blake's aesthetic. The "central form" in Blake's work is "the mental or human structure of the world, not the impingement of nature upon a tabula rasa."[2] The poet and the prophet are one, for both poetic and religious vision seeks to present "an intuition of the 'central form' of life." Art is prophetic in that it discloses a pattern for living. In Jerusalem, "the Apocalypse is the ultimate communal assertion of spiritual reality, of 'central form'." Adams points out that as an illustration of the greater directness in Jerusalem than formerly in The Four Zoas, in the expression of "Blake's apocalyptic idealism and his identification of poetic with prophetic inspiration," we may cite the shifting of emphasis to Los, as the Zoa who actually brings things about.[3] Instead of the narrative form, Blake projects his myth "as an expanding and contracting unity of images." Adams is also the first to draw attention to the similarity between the total resolution and total integration which Jerusalem represented for Blake and the similar qualities which Yeats found in Byzantium.

[1] Ithaca, New York, 1955.

[2] J. A. A. C., p. 237.

[3] Blake and Yeats, p.103.

Frye's essay, "Blake's Introduction to Experience",[1] is valuable for the present discussion in its insistence on the unity of Blake's poetic achievement, for just as Poetical Sketches "contains early lyrics and early prophecies in about equal proportions," at the time Blake was working at Felpham on his three major prophecies, he was also writing lyrics preserved in the Pickering Manuscript.

Dorothy Sayers, in her essay, "The Beatrician Vision in Dante and Other Poets,"[2] contrasts the classical mystical vision with the Dantean Beatrician vision that we find in Blake and other poets. Blake's "immediate and intuitive awareness of an eternal reality" has its basis in the world of physical phenomena, and is thus "a transfiguration of something actually existing in the outer world of sense."[3]

The challenge to the poetic qualities of Jerusalem is continued in W.H. Stevenson's essay, "Blake's Jerusalem."[4] Stevenson greatly enlarges upon the superficial criticisms of Stanley Gardener, and expresses doubts which I attempt to deal with in this thesis, but basically his argument is self-contradictory. At the

[1] Huntington Library Quarterly, 21 (1957), 57--67.

[2] Nottingham Medieval Studies, 2 (1958), 3--23.

[3] ibid., p.6.

[4] Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), 254--64.

same time as objecting to Blake's attempt at planned symmetry in his division of Jerusalem into four chapters of twentyfive plates each, when in fact "the extempore effusion" was Blake's true style, and his only successful poetic form, Stevenson also manages to criticise the fact that "his vision is all personal and grotesque." In the section dealing with similarities between Blake's and Ezekiel's view of history, I have attempted to answer Stevenson's charge that in effect a deus ex machina is required to bring to an end a continual round of incidents without direction.

A directly opposite view of the poem is expressed in Karl Kiralis's essay, "A Possible Revision in Blake's Jerusalem,"[1] Kiralis suggests that the number 97 on Design 90 of Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy, entitled "Dante Adoring Christ," refers to the original intention to include the design as Plate 97 of Jerusalem, illustrating the text of Plate 96. If we accept this suggestion, then, Kiralis writes, Blake's decision not to repeat the design of Plate 76, a repetition which would cloud the latter's introductory function to the last chapter, "would provide further evidence of Blake's careful planning of the work." Kiralis continues his defence of the later writings in his essay,"A Guide to

[1] Art Bulletin, 37 (1955), 203--04.

the Intellectual Symbolism of Blake's Later Prophetic Writings,"[1] examining the symbolism under the categories of personal, geographical, British-mythological, and Biblical symbols. Kiralis's conclusions are important, for he recognizes that Blake's symbolism, as well as being highly selective, is much more traditional and much less esoteric than has been generally assumed, and that his symbols are seldom static, but adapted to Blake's purpose as the poem progresses. Kiralis's discussion of the characters of Vala, Reuben and Erin is thorough, and fundamental to our understanding of the poem.

In his study of Blake "as revolutionary and prophet,"[2] Peter Fisher develops Frye's reading of Jerusalem, writing that "as the bride or 'emanation' of the Giant Albion, Jerusalem is Blake's way of uniting the Christian tradition of an Englishman to the English inheritance of a Christian."[3] "If The Four Zoas was the Purgatorio of Blake, clarifying and gathering together the tragic vision of man's fallen condition, Milton introduced his Paradiso, or final vision of redemption, in Jerusalem." [4] In this view, Milton represents "Blake's personal theodicy."

[1] Criticism, 1 (1959), 190--210.

[2] The Valley of Vision, ed. N. Frye, Toronto, 1961.

[3] ibid., p.223.

[4] ibid., p.247.

Fisher also expands the suggestions as to the background of the prophetic writings, put forward in his earlier essay, "Blake and the Druids," [1] where he writes that in the last two chapters of Jerusalem Blake comes to treat Druidism pejoratively "as the degenerate effect of man's fallen historical destiny on original prophetic inspiration," with theorizing leading to the growth of abstract philosophy and abstract law. Fisher's description of the symbolic function of Albion in Jerusalem is both concise and extremely comprehensive. "Albion is the ancestral soil of England on which Blake stood and from which he sprang. He is also the titanic forefather of Blake's own hinterland of symbolism - the original 'Giant Form' composing the greater world of his inner life from which are derived the Zoas or living creatures who make up the dramatis personae of the prophetic books. Historically Albion is the dreamer whose dream is the vision of history or the circle of destiny, and morally, or in terms of human nature, he is the field of spiritual adventure for the race. Finally, he is the description of the origin and destiny - that is, the essential existence - of humanity."[2]

Fisher gives support to the view that Blake's work as a whole possesses unity. He sees the theme of

[1] Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 58 (1959), 589--612.

[2] The Valley of Vision, p.220.

Jerusalem "foreshadowed in his Songs of Innocence and of Experience, satirically corrected and sharpened in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, symbolically tried and proved in the minor prophecies, outlined in The Four Zoas, and completed in Milton and Jerusalem."[1]

The view of the consistency of Blake's thought and identity of outlook from Poetical Sketches to Jerusalem, which, as we have seen, has been generally accepted since Frye's advocacy of it in Fearful Symmetry, is challenged at this point by E.D. Hirsch in his essay, "The Two Blakes."[2] Hirsch finds in Jerusalem a "rejection of the natural world . . . now more deeply entrenched than ever before," in contrast to the "central, this-wordly phase" from The French Revolution in 1791 to Vala. Hirsch also opposes the general tide in his belief that to Blake eternity signified something both metaphorical and literal. "Blake is not a solipsist and he is not using 'Eternity' in a merely metaphorical sense as representing only that which is permanent and fundamental in human consciousness."[3]

In direct contrast, Harold Bloom's commentary on the poetry, Blake's Apocalypse,[4] expounds Jerusalem in

[1] ibid., p.223.

[2] Review of English Studies, 12 (1961), 373--90.

[3] ibid., p. 387.

[4] New York, 1963.

terms of Blake's "apocalyptic humanism." A fuller discussion of Bloom's thesis will be found in my examination of the structure of Jerusalem, for Bloom's fine and detailed study reveals that "it is a very orderly poem, much more so than the comments of many of Blake's critics would lead us to expect,"[1] and indeed "the consolidation of its structure is . . . the most striking feature of Jerusalem as compared to either The Four Zoas or Milton." At the same time it must be said that Bloom concurs with the accepted view of the style of the poem when he writes that "Jerusalem is anything but a 'mild song'."[2] though he recognizes that whereas Milton, like The Prelude, concerned itself directly with a personal and creative crisis in the poet's life, Jerusalem, like Paradise Lost, is a retrospective poem of a different kind, a long Song of Experience that attempts a cosmic survey of the fallen condition,"[3] where Blake universalizes his inward torments. Bloom has much to say in detail about Blake's mastery of metaphor and of imagery, especially in skilful juxtaposition of various areas of reference, which will be acknowledged later in the appropriate section dealing with Blake's imagery. The thoroughness of Bloom's study provides much of what was lacking in the groundwork for an intelligent reading of not only Jerusalem

[1] ibid., p.366.

[2] ibid., p.368.

[3] ibid., p.365.

but all of Blake's poetry, and consolidates, in many ways, the reading of the poem advocated by Frye.

The cumulative impact of the visual aspects of Jerusalem is intelligently dealt with in Jean H. Hagstrum's study, William Blake, Poet and Painter.[1] The centrality of the image of the veil in Jerusalem is emphasized, along with the unity of the prophetic and the poetic in the eventual oneness of Los and Christ. A similar theme is treated in E.J. Rose's essay, "'Mental Forms Creating:' 'Fourfold Vision' and the Poet as Prophet in Blake's Designs and Verse."[2] Rose emphasizes that "fourfold vision, or fourfold anything for that matter, is a fallen description of infinite perfection, of unfallen Oneness," and that this "Oneness, or Unity, is not singularity or singleness, but unique variety."[3]

Both Harold Fisch, in his Jerusalem and Albion,[4] and Murray Roston, in his Prophet and Poet,[5] discuss the distinctive features of Hebraic as opposed to Hellenic poetry and thought patterns. Though neither

[1] Chicago, 1964.

[2] Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 23 (1964), 173--83.

[3] ibid., p. 173.

[4] "The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth Century Literature," 1964.

[5] "The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism", 1965.

is concerned exclusively with Blake, the latter's preoccupation with "the problem of spiritual disunification" [1] makes him a central figure in both discussions. Fisch takes Blake's "grave oracles" as his point of departure for studying "the spiritual and intellectual conflicts of the seventeenth century" because of Blake's "full-bodied Hebraism . . . both in the style and versification, and also in this positive appreciation of the body and the senses, and in the pervasive use of the imagery of marriage and betrothal." [2] Roston finds the contrast between Biblical moral probity and Greek delight in beauty and rationality a real one. Hebrew literature knows no abstract ideal of beauty, but lives within the context of a moral universe. Its imagery, like Blake's, is vividly particular and tangible, its effect being the integration of all aspects of human life. Roston sees in Blake a similar rhythm of meaning, a rhythm determined by sense, to that of Biblical prophetic writings, as well as a similar striving for rhetorical effects by means of abruptness and conciseness. Both Fisch and Roston see Blake's saturation in the rhythms and thought patterns of the Old Testament revealing itself most clearly in his desire to heal all dissociations and divisions, and to achieve a fully integrated image of man and the world.

[1] Fisch, op.cit., p.11.

[2] ibid., p. 275.

In her thorough and detailed study of Blake's verse in the prophetic books, as well as the lyrical poetry,[1] Alicia Ostriker, while seeing the leap from the minor prophetic books to the three final epics as "a leap not only in scale but in poetic assurance," finds that in Jerusalem the system, "which began to proliferate in Milton, has in his last great prophetic work almost entirely gobbled up his poetry."[2] Basically, Ostriker's conclusions bear out those of Frye, when he writes of the harshness of Jerusalem. Quoting Conrad's Stein; "In the destructive element immerse ", she writes that the verse becomes more irregular in Jerusalem, "flayed of ornament so that the blood and muscle of Blake's thought can be seen unveiled." The overall impression is of "the horrid clang of the Blake-Los hammer."

Ostriker finds the form of the poem an expression of Blake's major concerns at the time. His renunciation of nature is expressed in the absence of imitative versification; his desire for freedom in the increasing number of enjambed weak endings; and his concern with giving a body to falsehood in the deliberate ugliness of many of the lines. The verse of Jerusalem is not free verse, but rather the naked struggle of verse and prose, the product of the continual conflict between the two.

[1] Vision and Verse in William Blake, Madison, 1965.

[2] ibid., p.190.

Blake's purpose is to make his reader work to establish the rhythmical structure which the verse form leads him to expect.

Miss Ostriker's study is both specific and thorough, and provides a number of illuminating insights into Blake's poetic methods, and his care to perfect his techniques. She emphasizes his use of parallelism, "the most important structural principle of Biblical poetry," and points out that whereas Blake makes use of ironic regularity in verse structure, in the "delusive tones of females, for songs of war and human sacrifice," his "terrific numbers" are "always heavily and usually irregularly, accented," with "spondaic formations" and cumulative rhythms for emphasis.

A.A. Ansari, in his book, Arrows of Intellect,[1] develops the recognized dialectical movement of Jerusalem. The structure consists in the juxtaposition of gradually sharpening antitheses of fallen and unfallen aspects of the world. The regeneration of Albion results because Los retains his vitality, and commands obedience from the Spectre, unlike the situation in The Four Zoas. E.J. Rose, in his essay, "Blake's Human Insect,"[2] gives a

[1] Aligarh, India, 1965.

[2] Texas Studies in Language and Literature, 10 (1968), 215--32.

further insight into how the apocalypse comes about when he points out that "the imaginative apocalypse in Blake's work is dependent upon the new day to which we awake, and has nothing to do essentially with a 'mere lapse of time.'"[1] His essay, "Circumcision Symbolism in Blake's Jerusalem,"[2] demonstrates convincingly that "Blake's circumcision symbolism indicates typically that he saw art as the means by which reality was revealed rather than hidden in any kind of secret mystery open only to the initiate."[3]

In his comprehensive study of Blake's poetry, Blake's Visionary Universe,[4] a book which, in conjunction with his earlier study, Blake's Humanism,[5] reveals the coherence of Blake's poetic achievement, John Beer adds weight to the view of Jerusalem which sees it as a series of juxtaposed sequences. In some cases the sequences have been broken up and distributed throughout the poem, and "this piece-meal composition throws more importance upon the individual plate, which, while always in loose relation to the general theme of the poem, will often be found to be relatively self-contained."[6] Jerusalem is "a vast

[1] ibid., p.216.

[2] Studies in Romanticism, 8 (1968), 16--25.

[3] ibid., p. 16.

[4] Manchester, 1969.

[5] New York, 1968.

[6] Blake's Visionary Universe, p.173.

expression of the groaning and travailing of creation towards the life and visionary forms of eternity."[1] The virtue of Beer's study is its close interpretative reading of both text and designs, revealing the new specific quality of Blake's imagery in Jerusalem, the centrality of the ideal of brotherhood in the outcome of the poem, and pointing to parallels in Blake's poetry with Milton, Spenser and Marlowe.

Examining the change of direction in Blake's poetry from an emphasis on revolutionary energy to "the creation of a new, expanded myth, one which would both account for the failure of energy to redeem the world, and, at the same time, redefine the nature and function of the imagination," Morton D. Paley, in his study, Energy and Imagination,[2] writes that "in Jerusalem Energy and Imagination meet in a new synthesis, the best exemplification of which is the great poem itself - a little world made cunningly, microcosm and object of art, painting and prophecy."[3] Paley rightly emphasizes that the social ideal of Jerusalem is community, for art is a unitive force. The same unitive theme of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell reappears in a new form, through the

[1] ibid., p. 261.

[2] Oxford, 1970, p. 88.

[3] ibid., p. 260.

powerful activity of Los. In his essay "Cowper as Blake's Spectre,"[1] Paley presents a fine case for the view that Blake had Cowper in mind at several points, as when he shows his pity for the Spectre, a pity which "makes us think of an individual rather than an abstraction," and in the Spectre's belief that he is irrevocably damned by a God of wrath. Cowper's madness lay not in his Methodism, but in his religious despair, and Paley points out the "special regard for and interest in Cowper" which Blake felt, seeing the dampening of Cowper's visionary enthusiasm as the result of the influence of his patron, Hayley.

Kathleen Raine, in her study, Blake and Tradition,[2] focuses attention on what she sees as the unifying principle in Blake's work, "traditional metaphysics with its accompanying language of symbolic discourse."[3] She finds the sources and influences of Blake's work in the arcane tradition largely neglected with the rise of modern science, embracing Pythagoreanism, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Cabalism, alchemy, and other mystical writings, for "mythology, not history, is Blake's cosmos."[4] It is a study to be approached with caution,

[1] Eighteenth Century Studies, 1 (1968), 236--52.

[2] 2 vols., 1969.

[3] ibid., p. xxvi.

[4] ibid., p. xxv.

often finding the sources of Blake's symbolism in the "ancient Mysteries" rather than in the "Great Code of Art" which is the Bible, and which was a much stronger influence on Blake's thinking.

Kathleen Raine's essay, "A Note on Blake's Unfettered Verse,"[1] one of the few devoted to a study of the poetry of the prophetic books, concludes that Blake "tends towards the unbounded, but never, it must be said, to the formless, only to the longer phrases of ever more comprehensive form."[2] The value of this essay lies in its presentation of specific evidence to justify such high praise of Blake's poetic gifts in the later books, in which Blake, "in his use of the long line . . . is unequalled among English poets." Kathleen Raine shows how the free experimental rhythms in some poems, and especially in the poetic prose passages in Poetical Sketches, leads directly to the "vigorous, and virile" hexameters of The Book of Thel, and to the heptameters of the later books, where "Blake is the master, where Macpherson was the slave, of his sound pattern." By using a minimum of punctuation, the unbroken musical cadence of the verse is maintained.

[1] William Blake; Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. A.H. Rosenfeld, Brown Univ. Press, 1969, pp. 383--92.

[2] ibid., p. 392.

In his edition of The Poems of William Blake,[1] W.H. Stevenson provides an illuminating and comprehensive commentary on Jerusalem. Stevenson's view of Jerusalem derives from the perceptive claim that Blake's "most remarkable achievement was to unite the two notions" of a "personified Albion, subsuming all Britons," who becomes "an eternal reality" of whom "every person in this mortal life is a part," and of the New Jerusalem as city, woman, and bride of the Lamb, a vision "to be realized at home in England."[2]

It will be clear from this review that while there exists a broad area of agreement with regard to the coherence and intelligibility of Jerusalem as an epic poem, the result of the pioneering work into Blake's language and symbolism of, among others, Ellis and Yeats, Damon, Saurat, Murry, and Percival, and carried on notably by Frye, Wicksteed, Erdman, Fisher, and Bloom, there has by no means been any such agreement with regard to the quality of the poetry of Jerusalem. The claims of nineteenth century critics about the lack of discipline in Blake's later poetry, its "formlessness", which Yeats challenged,[3] have in large measure been superceded by the

[1] Longman Annotated English Poets series, 1971.

[2] ibid., pp. 622--23.

[3] "The Writings of William Blake," Bookman, 4 (1893), 146--47.

views of Frye, Erdman, and Bloom, that Jerusalem is harsh and ugly, but necessarily so, if it is to incarnate the reality of an ugly fallen world, a world which the poem both reveals and rejects in its movement towards reintegration and community. It has been well established that the contexts and traditions within which Jerusalem stands are Biblical and epic, and this conviction has prompted the direction of my own thesis. What needs much closer examination are the tentative claims of critics such as Damon, Murry, and Josephine Miles with regard to the poetic qualities of Jerusalem, to show that the poem deserves to take its place in the English epic tradition on the basis of its poetic achievement.

CHAPTER III.

The Context of "Jerusalem": Epic Design.

In one of his lectures, gathered under the title, A Preface to Paradise Lost,[1] C.S. Lewis writes of the epic poet that "he makes his epic a rite so that we may share it; the more ritual it becomes, the more we are elevated to the rank of participants. Precisely because the poet appears not as a private person, but as a Hierophant or Choregus, we are summoned not to hear what one particular man thought and felt about the Fall, but to take part, under his leadership, in a great mimetic dance of all Christendom, ourselves soaring and ruining from Heaven, ourselves enacting Hell and Paradise, the Fall and the repentance."[2] Jerusalem approximates to this definition of ritual in which we are called to participate. In the ironic inscription above the archway on the first plate of the poem, an inscription which Blake later deleted, possibly for visual artistic reasons, the poet presents Albion's situation and then calls upon the reader to share his vision:

[1] 1942.

[2] ibid., p.60.

His Sublime & Pathos become Two Rocks fixed in the Earth,
His reason, his Spectrous Power, covers them above.
Jerusalem his Emanation is a Stone laying beneath
O [A]lbion behold Pitying[] behold the Vision of Albion.[1]

In examining Jerusalem in the light of the English epic tradition, I hope to show its affinities with that tradition in its universality of range, its amplitude and inclusiveness of scope, and its control over the poetic material, as the definitive and mature expression of Blake's understanding of art and life, and as a total cyclical picture of the process of life in its reshaping of history and mythology in terms of the basic images of good and evil, heaven and hell.

The great unifying thread in epic development is, as E.M.W. Tillyard writes, "the prestige with which Homer and Virgil together invested the epic . . . without interruption to the end of the eighteenth century,"[2] and it is with Homer and Virgil that any inductive study of the English epic must begin.

[1] Jerusalem 1. The reading " [A]lbion behold Pitying[] " is 'somewhat conjectural' according to Erdman, in his textual notes to his edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, New York, 1965, p.731.

[2] The English Epic and Its Background, New York, 1954, p.109.

The ambivalence of Blake's attitude to Homer and Virgil towards the end of his life should not blind us to their formative influence on his poetry from his earliest years:

> What is it sets Homer Virgil & Milton in so high a rank of Art. Why is the Bible more Entertaining & Instructive than any other book. Is it not because they are addressed to the Imagination which is Spiritual Sensation & but mediately to the Understanding or Reason.[1]

In the same letter Blake sets the sublime of Homer alongside the sublime of the Bible:

> The wisest of the Ancients considerd what is not too Explicit as the fittest for Instruction because it rouzes the faculties to act. I name Moses Solomon Esop Homer Plato.

Blake's own epic was to be "on One Grand Theme Similar to Homer's Iliad or Milton's Paradise Lost." [2]

The vivid and colourful description of the Iliad, and its skilful evocation of feeling by providing reference points with which the reader is able to identify in the catalogues, and the Odyssey's themes of brotherhood, in the relationship between guest and host, and of the journey towards both a literal and a

[1] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

[2] Letter to Mr. Butts, 25 April 1803. As Frye warns, some of Blake's letters around this period are "very treacherous allies.. . . It is quite impossible to relate them exactly to the existing body of Blake's work" (Fearful Symmetry, p. 313). It is possible that Blake is referring here to an early draft of Jerusalem.

spiritual home, are important influences on the English epic tradition, and are all to be found in Jerusalem. However, the background to the awakening of Achilles to a new self-awareness and a new humanity in the Iliad is the aimless flux of history, with its continually alternating states of war and peace, in contrast to the more mature view of the Odyssey, with its movement towards the re-establishment of order in Ithica. In poetic style, as well as in epic design and theme, Homer's importance for the eighteenth century, and for Blake, must be stressed, especially as the great example of the sublime style. In the Preface to his translation of The Iliad of Homer, Pope writes that Homer's poetry is "of the most animated nature imaginable." [1] In variety of character portrayal, in language, and in inventive power, Pope finds that he has "made his Fable more extensive and copious than any other, . . . his Sentiments more warm and sublime, his Images and Descriptions more full and animated, his Expression more rais'd and daring, and his Numbers more rapid and various," through his power of "Invention." [2]

The Aeneid is more tightly constructed than either of Homer's poems, and Jerusalem's debt to Virgil is

[1] 1715, Vol.1, p.2.

[2] ibid., pp. 15--16.

both more specific and more extensive. Virgil's concern is with the cultural and social progression of history, a history which is no longer aimless, but which reveals an evolutionary design through destruction to renewal:

> per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
> tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas
> ostendunt; illic fas regna resurgere Troiae
> durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis. [1]

Through the adventures of Aeneas, Virgil reveals what Tillyard calls "a whole pattern of culture."[2] It is here that we find Virgil much closer to the spirit of Biblical themes, in the strong sense of national identity, national history, and national destiny in his poem. The poem's action and characters embody those elements which must be either incorporated or rejected in the renewal of a civilization. The story of Aeneas not only represents the birth of a people, the destiny of Rome, but also the destiny of mankind. Virgil's

[1] Aeneid, I, 204--07.
Through various Hazards, and Events we move
To Latium, and the Realms foredoom'd by Jove.
Call'd to the Seat, the Promise of the Skies,
Where Trojan Kingdoms once again may rise.
Endure the Hardships of your Present State,
Live, and reserve yourselves for better Fate.
Virgil's Aeneis, trans. John Dryden, 1763, book I, 285--90.

[2] Tillyard, op.cit., p.70.

procedure, as Lewis writes, "was to take one single national legend and treat it in such a way that we feel the vaster theme to be somehow implicit in it.. . . He must locate his action in a legendary past and yet make us feel the present, and the intervening centuries, already foreshadowed." [1] The hesitant Latinus and the self-willed Turnus both act as foils to Aeneas as the embodiment of the true Roman spirit, though not in any simplistic sense, for Turnus is a man of great courage, and Virgil describes his death with much pathos.

There is a strong resemblance, then, between the design of Jerusalem and of the Aeneid. In Jerusalem Blake seeks to shape history in a way which reveals its truly human form. His national epic is universalized into the epic of a whole civilization, giving symbolic expression to the traditions which have determined it, and pointing the way towards a renewal of that civilization. Virgil's combination of the immediacy and vividness of Homer's descriptive power with a new awareness of symbolic meaning, a developed sense of the complexity of life, and the deceitfulness of appearance and reality, meant that, as Lewis writes, "the explicitly religious subject for any future epic has been dictated by Virgil; it is the only further development left." [2]

[1] Lewis, op.cit., p.34.
[2] ibid., p.39.

The Aeneid portrays the significance of time and of the historical moment in a way that is similar to the Biblical understanding of history, in which "the key events are abrupt, cataclysmic, and make a drastic, even an absolute, difference." [1] Events are equally momentous in the Aeneid:

> Postquam res Asiae Priamque evertere gentum
> immeritam visum superis, ceciditque superbum
> Ilium et omnis humo fumat Neptunia Troia,
> diversa exsilia et desertas quaerere terras
> auguriis agimur divum. [2]

Along with this awareness of the significance of time is a compelling sense of poetic responsibility. In his Studies in Virgil, [3] T.R. Glover writes of Virgil that "poetry was to him something like the 'burden' of a Hebrew prophet, a necessity. Thought and feeling sought and compelled expression, not any expression, but their 'inevitable' expression." [4] At the beginning of Jerusalem Blake makes a similar claim for his poem:

[1] M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, 1971, p.36.

[2] Aeneid, III, 1--5.
When Heav'n had overturn'd th' Trojan State,
And Priam's Throne, by too severe a Fate:
When ruin'd Troy became the Grecians Prey,
And Ilium's lofty Tow'rs in Ashes lay:
Warn'd by Celestial Omens, we retreat,
To seek in foreign Lands a happier Seat.
Virgil's Aeneis, trans. John Dryden, 1763, Book III, 1--6.

[3] 1904.

[4] ibid., p.63.

This theme calls me in sleep night after night,
& every morn,
Awakes me at sun-rise, then I see the Saviour over me
Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words
of this mild song. [1]

I have already mentioned the technique of the catalogue, a technique used by both Homer and Virgil which Blake makes use of in Jerusalem, where it is often the subject of adverse criticism. As well as evoking feeling and establishing an identity between the reader and the poem, the catalogue in Jerusalem has the task of being both informational and structural. It is intended as an intrusion on the narrative movement of the poem, a short tour de force, giving strength and life to the poetic design, and at the same time focusing our attention on the scale of the poet's intentions. [2]

In dealing with the relationship between Jerusalem and the medieval epic, I want to examine closely Frye's claim that Langland "is perhaps spiritually closer to Blake than any other English poet," [3] especially in his "prodigious effort to combine his English and Christian perspectives," [4] but first it will be necessary to say

[1] Jerusalem. 4. 3--5.

[2] In his book, Blake's Visionary Universe, Manchester, 1969, John Beer suggests that the catalogue is a demonstration "that an English poet can have the sort of feeling for the towns of England that a Hebrew poet had for the towns of Palestine" (p.176). Blake "is also trying to suggest that each has its own visionary identity, its own creative possibilities."

[3] Fearful Symmetry, p.304.

[4] ibid., p.318.

something about the allegorical form of the medieval epic, signifying as it does a different way of thinking about man and the world. It represents a unity of meaning and reality, of word and deed, and of symbol and fact in a world which is the very centre of divine attention. Erich Heller, in his book, The Hazard of Modern Poetry,[1] compares the Zwinglian revolution, in which the sacrament comes to represent symbolically what in itself it is not, to the Copernican revolution in thinking about the status of the earth.[2] Body becomes merely body, symbol merely symbol. Where symbol and reality had earlier been fully committed to each other, gradually they became more and more estranged, so that value becomes "the contraband of unreality smuggled into the real world." The medieval allegorical mode of expression represents a way of seeing in which bread and wine are the reality of the infinite, and the language of poetry, like the language of religion, possesses an essential degree of reality.

[1] Cambridge, 1953.

[2] Heller illustrates this by reference to the 17th century use of paradox and ambiguity, "the manner of speaking when reality and symbol . . . are at cross purposes." Music replaced architecture in importance, as "the speechless triumph of the spirit in a world of words without deeds and deeds without words." The real is robbed of its symbolic significance, and the state becomes a Leviathan, God a "deus absconditus," and reality subject to the fingers of the analyst.

There is no evidence to suggest that Blake could have been familiar with Piers Plowman, except for those parts of the poem which Thomas Warton quotes in his History of English Poetry,[1] but Langland's poem is important for this study in that, as Tillyard suggests, behind it stand those sources which are "the common property of western Europe."[2] His range, like Blake's, extends to all ranks of society:

> That reuthe is to rede othere in ryme shewe
> The wo of these women that wonyeth in cotes;
> And of meny other men that muche wo suffren,
> Both a - fyngrede and a - furst.[3]

He is at once visionary and concerned with the social and practical matters of every day. His allegorical vision of England is a vision of the world, the setting at once localized and universalized. The combination of personal and public themes is found continually in the English epic tradition through Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, to Blake.

At the beginning of Piers Plowman, Holy Church reveals the situation of the country to the dreamer:

> . . . . . 'sone, slepist thou? sest thou this peple,
> How besy thei ben aboute the mase?
> The moste partie of this peple that passith on this erthe,
> Haue thei worsshipe in this world thei kepe no betere:
> Of other heuene thanne here holde thei no tale.' [4]

[1] 1774--81.

[2] Tillyard, op.cit., p. 158.

[3] C Text, Passus X, 82--85.

[4] A Text, Passus I, 5--9.

This is a direct parallel to the situation of Albion under the illusory influence of Vala:

> 'Whence camest thou! who art thou O loveliest?
> the Divine Vision
> Is as nothing before thee, faded is all life and joy.[1]

As with Jerusalem, Piers Plowman grows directly out of the poet's reaction to the evident corruptions in contemporary society:

> Fals and fauel farith forth togidere,
> And mede in the myddis, and al this mene aftir.
> I haue no tom to telle the tall that hem folewith
> Of many maner of men that on this molde libbeth.
> Ac gile was forgoere and gyede hem alle.[2]

> He views the Cherub at the Tree of Life, also the
> Serpent,
> Orc the first born coild in the south: the Dragon
> Urizen:
> Tharmas the Vegetated Tongue even the Devouring
> Tongue:
> A threefold region, a false brain: a false heart:
> And false bowels: altogether composing the False
> Tongue.[3]

In the midst of this situation Langland's epic, like Jerusalem, seeks to direct human activity towards its two-fold goal. The first ideal which Piers Plowman points up is that of the community, bound together in unity, a unity which Albion fears and flees from at the beginning of

[1] Jerusalem 29, 33--34.

[2] A Text, Passus II, 145--49.

[3] Jerusalem 14, 2--6.

Jerusalem, but which is restored at the end, with "all human forms identified." [1] At the same time Langland directs man towards the ideal balanced state, wisely counselled by Reason and Conscience. This is the imitation of Christ which Blake's Albion must regain also in the unity and cooperation of the Four Zoas:

> I am redy, quoth resoun, 'to reste with you euere;
> So conscience be of your counseil, kepe I no betere.'
> 'I graunte,' quath the king, 'goddis forbode he faille!
> As longe as I lyve libbe we togideris.' [2]

As the one who seeks to direct human activity in these directions, Piers himself is a Los figure.

However, it is not only in terms of cosmic scale, range and theme that Blake and Langland are closely linked. In structure and technique there are also important comparisons. Tillyard rightly points to the process of strengthening and particularizing which motivates Langland's revisions from A to C Text, increasing the visual qualities of the poem, the alliteration most often falling on the descriptive epithets, and he observes that "Langland is like Blake in his natural power over the music and emphasis of words." [3] Blake shares Langland's gift of combining vividness of description with

[1] ibid., 99. 1.

[2] A Text, Passus IV, 155--58.

[3] Tillyard, op.cit., p.156.

great verbal economy.

Another point of contact between Blake and Langland is clear in that Langland to some extent stands outside the introspective tradition of medieval piety, just as Blake, to a much greater extent, stands outside the same tradition in western Protestantism, an introspection particularly evident in the emphasis through the Middle Ages and into Lutheran Christianity on intense self examination. On the other hand the theme of endurance, deriving from the book of Job, pervades Piers Plowman, and is a necessary part of Los's triumph in Jerusalem.

The spirit of Jerusalem, then, is much closer to the spirit of the medieval epic than to that of the early Renaissance, for as Frye writes, "it is because of its innate Hebraism that the Middle Ages, with all its faults, provided on the whole a better milieu for the visionary than Classical culture."[1]

With The Fairie Queene, we move on from classical and medieval epic to the Gothic. In his Letters on Chivalry and Romance,[2] Richard Hurd writes of Spenser and Milton that "it is not to be doubted but that each

[1] Fearful Symmetry, p.149.

[2] 1762.

of these bards had kindled his poetic fire from classic fables. So that, of course, their prejudices would lie that way. Yet they both appear, when most inflamed, to have been more particularly rapt with the Gothic fables of chivalry. Spenser, tho' he had been long nourished with the Spirit and substance of Homer and Virgil, chose the times of chivalry for his theme, and fairy Land for the scene of his fictions. He could have planned, no doubt, an heroic design on the exact classical model: Or, he might have trimmed between the Gothic and Classic, as his contemporary Tasso did. But the charms of fairy prevailed. . . . Under this idea then of a Gothic, not classical poem, the Faery Queen is to be read and criticised. And on these principles, it would be difficult to unfold its merit in another way than has been hitherto attempted." [1] Hurd goes on to examine the structure of the poem, not according to classical models, but as a Gothic poem, whose unity "consists in the relation of its several adventures to one common original, the appointment of the Faerie Queene; and to one common end, the completion of the Faerie Queene's injunctions," [2] attempting to show how Gothic manners and machinery have the advantage over the classical in all types of poetic invention, especially the sublime. We will have cause to examine Blake's use of this tradition when speaking

[1] ibid., pp. 55--56.

[2] ibid., p.66.

of Jerusalem in relation to Paradise Lost.

C.S. Lewis's characterization of Spenser's poetry, much of it, like Blake's, the poetry of statement, is worth quoting: "It is as direct as good medieval verse; not to be lingered over, carrying us equably forward." Lowell's image of Spenser's verse as wave following wave moving relentlessly forward reminds us of Bloom's description of the style of Jerusalem as "a series of firebursts, one wave of flame after another." [1] Undoubtedly, as Frye points out, Spenser's description of Chaucer reborn in himself is important for an understanding of Blake's relation to Milton, [2] just as Spenser's affirmation of the primacy of the artist, refusing the restraint of the grammarian's rules, is important for an understanding of the sense of poetic responsibility in Milton and Blake.

Tillyard and Frye would appear to disagree as to the nature of Blake's use of symbols. Frye writes that "if we look closely at Spenser's allegory, we can see that he is using the same symbols from the Bible that Blake is using, and in much the same way." [3] Tillyard

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy," Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

[2] Fearful Symmetry, p.319.

[3] ibid., p.142.

on the other hand, writes of Spenser's "certain faculty of vision" that "I do not think this faculty was like Blake's, that of seeing something other in an object and keeping both elements apart ('With my inward Eye 'tis an old Man grey; with my outward, a Thistle across my way'). It is rather that he could apprehend an abstract world with an uncommon intensity and thereby lend to certain things actually experienced a corresponding brilliance."[1] Each is talking about a different aspect of Blake's verse, however. Just as Blake recognized degrees of vision, so he employs and fuses idea and symbol in different ways and in different degrees. At times he does, as Tillyard suggests, keep object and symbol apart:

> 'I am your Rational Power O Albion & that Human Form
> You call Divine, is but a Worm seventy inches long
> That creeps forth in a night & is dried in the morning sun. [2]

It is much more common, though, for Blake's poetry at its best to reveal that same vivid and lucid apprehension of the world of abstractions that we find in Spenser. As an example of this, we could quote from the building of Golgonooza, or Blake's portrayal of contemporary London, or this passage describing the words of Jehovah:

[1] Tillyard, op.cit., p.290.

[2] Jerusalem 29. 5--7.

. . . And I heard Jehovah speak
Terrific from his Holy Place & saw the Words of the
Mutual Covenant Divine
On Chariots of gold & jewels with Living Creatures
starry & flaming
With every Colour, Lion, Tyger, Horse, Elephant,
Eagle Dove, Fly, Worm,
And the all wondrous Serpent clothed in gems & rich
array Humanize
In the Forgiveness of Sins according to the Covenant
of Jehovah. [1]

The most important aspect of The Faerie Queene in its influence upon Jerusalem is Spenser's fusion of Christian and British mythology. Blake systematically reveals a pattern of correspondence between English and Palestinian geography, and reinterprets British history in terms of the Biblical organization of history. This is all the more remarkable in view of Tillyard's claim that "politically and socially, with confusion in its counsels of state and the suppression of the nonconforming sections of the community, England after 1667 was not propitious to epic writing. It was not an epic area like the England of Elizabeth." [2]

In his Author's Preface to the 1656 edition of his poems, Abraham Cowley makes a strong claim that the most

[1] ibid., 98. 40--45.

[2] Tillyard, op.cit., p.470. In support of this view, Tillyard instances the lack of positive convictions, the disappointment of hopes of national greatness, a scepticism and suspicion of anything appearing utopian, and a new "civilised, sophisticated, and enlightened" scientific attitude. (op.cit. p.471).

fitting subjects for epic poetry are Biblical. He asks if "the friendship of David and Jonathan" does not afford "more worthy celebration than that of Theseus and Perithous? Does not the passage of Moses and the Israelites into the Holy Land yield incomparably more poetical variety than the voyages of Ulysses or Aeneas?.... All the books of the Bible are either already most admirable and exalted pieces of poesy, or are the best materials in the world for it." [1] Accordingly Cowley turned to the story of David for his Davideis, a poem in twelve books "after the pattern of our master Virgil," [2] a long work in rhyming couplets.

The true example of Biblical epic, however, Milton's Paradise Lost, is a poem which takes a Biblical subject and imaginatively transforms it. Indeed, the greatness of Paradise Lost lies in its fusion of Biblical and Western themes; its uniting of the perennial relevance of the Genesis story of the fall of man, and its lament for the present state of humanity, with the Renaissance spirit, as Eric Smith suggests in his book, Some Versions of The Fall[3] of "glorification of the physical world," and its heroic endurance of reality. In Milton's poem these hitherto contrasted world-views meet and become fused in the themes of man's heroic struggle and his

[1] Select Works in Verse and Prose of Mr. A. Cowley, ed. Richard Hurd, 2 vols., 1772, Vol. 1, p.88.

[2] ibid., p.81.

[3] 1973. p.7.

lamentable rebellion, and in the colour of the poem's vivid description. J.A. Wittreich Jr., in his essay "Opening the Seals," [1] rightly refers to Milton as the liberator of epic poetry in that he fuses Biblical and English history, and in doing so, reveals himself not only as interpreter of the Scriptures, and interpreter of history, but also as the creator of an image of the fall, redemption and restoration of the earth, for his own age. It is in this sense that Milton can be said to be a prophet, Wittreich suggests, for he shows himself to be both interpreter of the visions of others and of his own vision. It is this concept of a national religious epic which Blake adopts from Milton and strives for in Jerusalem.

I have already referred to Blake's sense of having been called out and commissioned with the task of Jerusalem, a subject which will concern us again in the next chapter of this thesis, as part of the prophetic tradition which Blake inherited, but which is also an important element of the 18th and 19th century Miltonic inheritance. In his Preface to the 1815 edition of Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth writes that "The grand store houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contra-distinguished from human and dramatic

[1] S. Curran and J.A. Wittreich Jr., eds., Blake's Sublime Allegory, Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1973.

Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser." [1] Wordsworth gives poetic expression to this sense of calling in his own long poem, The Prelude:

> . . . to the open fields I told
> A prophecy: poetic numbers came
> Spontaneously, and cloth'd in priestly robe
> My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,
> For holy services. [2]

In his study of poetic relationship, Blake and Milton,[3] Denis Saurat writes of the "remarkable similarity of mind and temperament" [4] which exists between the two poets. Blake's concerns in Jerusalem are historical and metaphysical, and he gives them expression, like Milton, in a language which is strong, masculine, often aggressive. His defence of the metre of Jerusalem in the first prose preface on Plate 3 is modelled on Milton's defence of the verse of Paradise Lost, and is an assertion of the liberty of the artist just as Milton desired to free himself from the restrictions which hampered Cowley in his Davideis, the restrictions of rhyming couplets, and

[1] The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, 5 vols., Oxford, 1944. Vol.2, p.439.

[2] The Prelude (1805--6 edition), I, 50--54.

[3] Bordeaux, 1920.

[4] ibid., p.9.

just as Spenser affirmed the primacy of the artist above the rules of the grammarians.

As epics which affirm the liberty of man, Jerusalem and Paradise Lost often treat similar themes, in their stern opposition to all false religions, their rejection of "female usurpation," [1] and the corrupting influence of self-righteousness. Eve's stubborn separation from Adam in Paradise Lost, Book IX, leads directly to Satan's victory over her, and it is her indignation and self-confidence, misplaced as it turns out, which motivates her action:

> . . . but Eve, who thought
> Less attributed to her Faith sincere,
> Thus her reply with accent sweet renewd. [2]

In Jerusalem, Los, in a moment of insight into his own situation, recognizes the spectrous within him to be self-righteousness:

> Thou art my Pride & Self-righteousness. I have found thee out;
> Thou art reveald before me in all thy magnitude & power. [3]

To some eighteenth century theorists, epic poetry had reached its goal with Milton, and no further progression was possible. William Warburton gives

[1] Samson Agonistes, l.1060.

[2] Paradise Lost, IX, 319--21.

[3] Jerusalem 8. 30--31.

expression to such a view in his The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated, [1] when he writes that:

> just as Virgil rivaled Homer, so Milton was the emulator of both. He found Homer possessed of the province of MORALITY; Virgil of POLITICS; and nothing left for him, but that of RELIGION . . . and by means of the superior dignity of his subject, hath gotten to the head of that triumvirate which took so many ages in forming.

Warburton continues:

> Here then the grand Scene was closed: and all further improvements of the Epic at an end.

However, such a view was flatly contradicted by William Hayley in his An Essay on Epic Poetry, [2] Epic is by no means a thing of the past:

> For, if the Epic Muse still wish to tower
> Above plain Nature's firm and graceful power,
> Tho' Critics think her vital powers are lost
> In cold Philosophy's petrific frost;
> That Magic cannot her sunk charms restore,
> That Heaven and Hell can yield her nothing more;
> Yet may she dive to many a secret source
> And copious spring of visionary force. [3]

Hayley's desire is to see a national British epic written in his own time:

> Yet nobler aims the Bards of Britain court,
> Who steer by Freedom's star to Glory's part;
> Our gen'rous Isle, with far superior claim,
> Asks for her Chiefs the palm of Epic form. [4]

[1] 1738. Book II, Sect. IV.

[2] 1782.

[3] ibid., Epistle V, 263--70.

[4] ibid., Epistle V, 277--80.

Much Neo-classic epic theory may well have sharpened Blake's formulation of his epic intentions by causing him to react strongly against it. Blake would have had little sympathy with Robert Wood's presentation of Homer, in his An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer,[1] as a poet who "took his scenery and landscape from Nature, his manners and characters from life, his persons and facts (whether fabulous or historical) from tradition, and his passions and sentiments from experience of the operation of the human mind in others, compared with and corrected by, his own feelings."[2] Robert Lowth's emphasis, in his Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,[3] is more likely to have stimulated Blake's mind with his emphasis on the identification of the prophet and the poet, not only in Hebrew, but also "in the Arabic language, in the Greek, and in the Latin,"[4] and with his discussion of "that sublimer kind of allegory" given poetic form by the Hebrews. It is to this prophetic as well as poetic tradition that I now turn.

[1] 1775.

[2] ibid., p.177.

[3] 1753, trans. 1787.

[4] ibid., Lecture XVIII.

CHAPTER IV.

The Context of "Jerusalem": The Prophetic Tradition.

In discussing Jerusalem's relation to the English epic tradition, I suggested that Abraham Cowley was the Baptist to Milton's Messiah in his assertion that the most fitting subjects for epic poetry are Biblical. The merging of traditions of epic poetry and Biblical prophecy in Paradise Lost, in which Milton is both the writer of the national epic and prophet of Christianity, was further developed in the eighteenth century with various attempts to stress British national heritage in the poetry of Spenser and Milton and in the ballad tradition, notably by Richard Hurd, Thomas Percy and Thomas Warton. With growing antiquarian interest in ancient Britain, there was also a desire to identify the British bard with the Hebrew prophet, and a turning to native traditions to find distinctively British energies was reinforced by the influence of Biblical commentators such as Robert Lowth and William Warburton, and the former's claim that Anglo-Saxon English had the same rugged qualities of language as Hebrew, and by the identification of the public, epic poet and mythmaker with the native, tribal bard, which is particularly clear in the influence and popularity of the poems of Ossian.

Central to any concept of a national epic in Blake's time was the idea of sublimity, an idea in which obscurity played an essential part. In his Enquiry Burke writes of finding "reasons in nature why the obscure idea, when properly conveyed, should be more affecting than the clear." [1] Robert Lowth's emphasis on the sublime in Biblical prophecy is echoed in the assertions of his fellow commentators on the Bible that obscurity is also an essential part of prophecy. East Apthorp clearly expresses such a view in his Discourses on Prophecy in 1786:

> From the very nature of Prophecy, as flowing from the Divine Prescience, Obscurity is essential to it. A prophecy, divested of its mystic and recondite character, would be a direction rather than a presage. [2]

In uniting his epic and prophetic aspirations, Blake rejected not only the view that prophecy, by its very nature, must be abstruse and obscure, but along with it, the whole attitude to prophecy which Apthorp represents. This traditional view saw prophecy as prediction or "presage", and developed from what Rudolf Otto has called "the traditional theory of the

[1] Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, 1757, part 2, sect. IV.

[2] Discourse II, p. 53.

miraculous as the occasional breach in the causal nexus in nature by a Being who himself instituted and must therefore be master of it - this theory is itself as massively 'rational' as it is possible to be. Rationalists have often enough acquiesced in the possibility of the miraculous in this sense; they have even themselves contributed to frame a theory of it; - whereas anti-rationalists have been often indifferent to the whole controversy about miracles." [1] Blake's rejection of a similarly 'rational' view of prophecy is in favour of an understanding of it as the warning of the honest man to avert impending disaster, and in this obscurity had no part. Blake's response to Sir Joshua Reynolds's suggestion that "obscurity . . . is one source of the sublime" is well known:

Obscurity is Neither the Source of the Sublime nor of any Thing Else. [2]

Rather, Blake's warning that "what is Grand is necessarily obscure to Weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care," [3] is directly related to Böhme's warning to those who would impose abstract speculation on his work:

[1] The Idea of the Holy, trans. J.W. Harvey, 1923, p.3.

[2] Annotations to the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourse VII, p.194.

[3] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

> As to the children of God, they shall perceive and comprehend this my Writing, what it is, for it is a very convincing Testimony . . . But it continues hidden and obscure to the Children of Malignity and Iniquity, and there is a fast Seal before it. [1]

As I have already suggested in discussing Blake's epic intentions in Jerusalem, it is part of his purpose to invite his reader to participate in the action of the poem. This is strengthened by the merging of the epic and prophetic traditions, so that it is far from the author's intention to deliberately conceal his meaning.

At the beginning of Jerusalem, Blake makes it clear that one of the contexts of his poem is the prophetic tradition of the Book of Ezekiel, whose symbolic actions, as he told Blake, were with "the desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite."[2] It was this prophetic mantle which Blake took to himself:

> To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the Immortal Eyes
> Of man inwards into the Worlds of thought: into
> Eternity
> Ever expanding in the Bosom of God. The Human
> Imagination [3]

Blake shows his awareness of the responsibility of the prophet to bring about a reintegration of national life

[1] "Author's Preface" to The Three Principles of the Divine Essence, The Works of Jacob Behmen, with figures by W. Law, 4 vols., 1764--81, Vol. 1, p.8.

[2] The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 3.

[3] Jerusalem 5. 18--20.

in his letter to William Hayley, where he claims that:

> Receiving a Prophet As a Prophet is a Duty which If omitted is more Severely Avenged than Every Sin & Wickedness beside.[1]

I have already referred to the sense of calling which Blake and Wordsworth inherited from Milton, an awareness which is central to the prophet's claims to authority. Blake, Gilchrist claims, had "high, though at ordinary moments unobtrusive notions of his calling, of the dignity of it, and its superiority to all mere worldly distinctions."[2] Milton, often regarded in the eighteenth century as having been compensated for his blindness by heightened spiritual insight, expresses in his ode, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, his desire to speak in response to the divine imperative, recalling Isaiah's commissioning:

> And joyn thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
> From out his sacred Altar touch'd with hallow'd fire.

In his Theology of the Old Testament,[3] Walter Eichrodt writes of how this divine imperative brought with it all the uncertainty of following the Spirit in his creativity. We might also add that this uncertainty was a dedication, among other things, to suffering, as in the case of Ezekiel, and the loss of his wife.[4]

[1] Letter to William Hayley, 11 December 1805.

[2] Gilchrist, op.cit., p.50.

[3] 2 vols., trans. J.A. Baker, S.C.M. Press, 1961.

[4] Ezekiel 24. 15--18.

In a letter to Dr. Trusler,[1] Blake quotes with approval Milton's invocation of Urania in Paradise Lost:

> . . . . . yet not alone, while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
> Purples the east: still govern thou my song [2]

and Balaam's protest that he "cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord" in the Book of Numbers.[3] Blake's claim that he received Jerusalem by dictation, the words of the God:

> Who in mysterious Sinais awful cave
> To Man the wondrous art of writing gave,
> Again he speaks in thunder and in fire! [4]

is an attempt to establish his poem both in the context of Hebrew prophecy and of Milton's epic achievement.

Closely allied to this awareness of responsibility is the sense of inner compulsion of the faithful watchman, combined with the ability to communicate in word and deed, or word as deed, his inspired insight. Like the man with the inkhorn in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, who marks those who sigh and groan over the wickedness in the land, or as in the contradistinction of the sheep to the goats in the first chapter of Jerusalem, the

1 Letter to Dr. Trusler, 16 August 1799.

2 Paradise Lost VII 28--30.

3 Numbers 24. 13.

4 Jerusalem 3.

prophet warns against the worship of lesser deities and unworthy gods. The prophet is the Abdiel who stands alone, enduring reproach, often alone in seeing, like Yeats, that "there's more enterprise in walking naked":[1]

> so spake the seraph Abdiel faithful found,
> Among the faithless, faithful only he;
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified.
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.[2]

This is the pattern of Noah, of John the Baptist, of Christ himself, which Blake has in mind when he writes:

> Every honest man is a Prophet he utters his opinion both of private and public matters Thus If you go on So the result is So He never says such a thing Shall happen let you do what you will, a Prophet is a Seer not an Arbitrary Dictator.[3]

He is like Yeats, driven as C.M. Bowra suggests, to the responsibility of enterprise from among "the seven sleepers of Ephesus" by the events of 1916,[4] or like Ezekiel, the prophet in isolation, never seeing the fulfilment of his words and often tempted to despair, but his forehead made hard as adamant for perseverance in the struggle:

> And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dwell among scorpions[5]

[1] W.B. Yeats, "A Coat."

[2] Paradise Lost v 896--900.

[3] Annotations to R. Watson's An Apology for the Bible, p.14.

[4] The Prophetic Element, English Association Address, 1959.

[5] Ezekiel 2. 6.

or like Böhme, interpreter of the past in his philosophy of history, guide of the present in his dedication to a process of national renewal, and creator of the future as the generator of light in darkness. When, in Jerusalem, Los enters "the Door of Death for Albions sake Inspired"[1] as depicted on Plate 1, determination on his face, his hair and garments blown by the winds of despair and death, he typifies the prophet who obeys by doing, both in acting and in speaking, for:

> Fearing that Albion should turn his back against
> the Divine Vision
> Los took his globe of fire to search the interiors
> of Albions Bosom,
> in all the terrors of friendship[2]

The prophet's role, warning of the impending collapse of national identity, that "If you go on So the result is So", involves what Eichrodt calls "a head-on collision between the divine reality and the empirical world."[3] Such a collision is directly related to the discovery which Georges Poulet describes, of "the essentially religious character of human centrality. 'I am the centre, the holy spring/From which all longing wildly flows' sings Astralis in Novalis's novel Heinrich von Ofterdingen."[4] M.H. Abrams has referred in passing,

[1] Jerusalem 1.

[2] ibid., 45. 2--4.

[3] Eichrodt, op.cit., p.345.

[4] Les Metamorphoses du Cercle, "Le Romantisme", 1961, trans. A.K.Thorlby in The Romantic Movement, 1966, p.40.

in his book, Natural Supernaturalism,[1] to the similarities between Blake's Jerusalem and Novalis's Heinrich von Ofterdingen, describing the latter as "a symbolic narrative of the growth of a poet's mind, represented in the vehicle of a sustained journey through the realms of experience."[2] In his novel, published in 1799--1800, Novalis brings together many aspects of Biblical tradition, synthesizing them with elements of German mysticism, especially in the works of Böhme, and with the philosophy of Fichte and Schelling, and arrives at an understanding of the world and the poet's responsibility in it, very similar to Blake's. In his Blütenstaub, Novalis writes:

> The key to all mystery heads inwards. Eternity with its worlds of past and future, is in us or nowhere. . . . The thought organs are world producing[3]

reminding us of Blake's desire in Jerusalem to "open the Eyes/Of man inwards into the Worlds of thought."[4] In the work of both Novalis and Blake, as in the Book of Ezekiel, the perception of the prophet strikes at the very roots of the prevailing culture; at its approach to knowledge and assumptions of reality. Poulet goes on to write of how this discovery of the "essentially religious character of human centrality" leads to "Every moment of

[1] 1971, pp. 245--52.

[2] ibid., p.249.

[3] Athenäum, 1798.

[4] Jerusalem 5. 18--19.

existence, every place" becoming "an irradiating centre of energy," quoting with approval Lamartine's view of man as the one who "is master of the Infinite through thought, and, pushing back forever the frontiers of his being, expands throughout all space and lives in every time." Refusal to begin from a position of philosophic rationalism is fundamental to Jerusalem, for natural religion, with its abstract metaphysics, is spectrous,[1] the motivating force of the reductive and ruinous wheel, whose name:

> Is Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death
> Of sin, of sorrow, & of punishment [2]

The movement towards the increasing isolation of the poet, standing over against his society, is evident in the change from the detached attitude of Pope's Essay on Man to the grotesque imagery of the 1743 version of The Dunciad. This sense of deep discontent is intelligently discussed in T.R. Edwards's study of Pope's poetry, This Dark Estate,[3] in which he writes of "a new personal abruptness of tone" in Pope's later poetry, its imaginative intensity straining the form to its limits. However, at the same time, The Dunciad remains a comic poem, for behind Pope stands at least a sizable and

[1] ibid., 10. 14.

[2] ibid., 77. 18--19.

[3] California, 1963.

important group of his contemporaries who share his vision, which is entirely absent when Blake comes to write Jerusalem.

Blake's search for a life-giving power to nourish the imagination led him away from the decorative classical mythology of the eighteenth century to the integrating culture of the Hebrews, a culture retaining its essential vitality by refusal to abstract the spiritual from the physical. The things of the spirit are expressed through the realities of the physical world, through bread and wine, milk and honey, oil and fine clothing, and the ways of God to man related in terms of man and wife, shepherd and flock, king and subjects.[1] It is this vitality which Blake sought to achieve when he wrote to Thomas Butts that he endeavoured with his whole might to "chain my feet to the world of Duty and Reality." Instead he found his "Abstract folly . . . carrying me over Mountains and Valleys, which are not Real, in a Land of Abstraction where Spectres of the Dead wander."[2]

The same search for an integrating mythology again led Blake to the Hebraic view of man as a complete unity.

[1] As W.C. Graham points out in his book, The Prophets and Israel's Culture, 1934, p.57, this close association of the physical and spiritual had the twofold effect of making the spiritual something real and eagerly sought after, and of enlarging and controlling human desires.

[2] Letter to Thomas Butts, 11 September 1801.

One of the "sacred codes", claiming that "Man has two real existing principles Viz. a Body & a Soul",[1] may well have been St. Augustine's claim in his City of God that "the soul assuredly is superior to the body," and his opposition of the "slave-like body" and the "sovereign soul",[2] a dualism influenced by St. Augustine's love of Virgil, and which exerted a vast effect into the Middle Ages and beyond. The contrary, Blake claims, is true:

> Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.[3]

Blake's art, uniting word and image, is a healer of division, the division into which man fell and is still falling:

> But the perturbed Man away turns down the valleys dark;
> Saying. We are not One: we are Many, thou most simulative
> Phantom of the overheated brain! shadow of immortality! [4]

Thus his art becomes a metaphor for the destruction of all apparent dualisms:

> This shall I do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid,[5]

[1] The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. 4.

[2] City of God, ed. Vernon J. Bourke, New York, 1958.

[3] The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. 4.

[4] Jerusalem 4, 22--24.

[5] The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. 14.

In this emphasis on the unity of life, Blake draws from the task of the prophet to set aside all cleavage of nature and grace, and to perceive everywhere the spiritual in the common, and from the stress on the unity of man in Ezekiel, deriving from the same emphasis throughout Biblical writings.[1]

Blake's perspective on history in Jerusalem has much in common with the Biblical prophetic sense of the coming apocalypse, and the movement of time from Paradise to the new Jerusalem, the new heaven and the new earth. The prophets had this eschatalogical concern because, as G.B. Caird suggests, "they saw in the historic crisis with which they were immediately concerned the point at which the circle of eternity touched the line of time, the moment when Israel was confronted with the ultimate issues of life and death."[2] Their prophetic awareness brings together the present and the future in a single composite image. Blake's historical perspective is also concerned with the same reaction against abstract, linear and measured time, as Böhme expresses in a motto:

> Wem Zeit ist wie Ewigkeit,
> Und Ewigkeit wie Zeit,
> Der ist befreit von allem Zeit.

[1] Ezekiel 3. 19 etc. See Genesis 2. 7.

[2] Saint Luke, "The Pelican New Testament Commentaries", 1963, p. 199.

Awareness of apocalypse is a release from Newtonian catagories of time and space, as Blake makes clear in Milton:

> And every Moment has a Couch of gold for soft repose,
> (A Moment equals a pulsation of the artery)
> And between every two Moments stands a Daughter of Beulah
> To feed the Sleepers on their Couches with maternal care. [1]

Visionary history, then, as Blake and the Jews understand it, is the locus of such moments, the locus of revelation, from which the lineaments of universal human life may be synthesized by the imaginative mind, as in Blake's reading of Chaucer:

> The Characters themselves for ever remain unaltered and consequently they are the Physiognomies or Lineaments of Universal Human Life.[2]

Such organization of history provides the nourishment of mythology for the poet's imagination, the cultivating and vivifying power by which his poetry lives, and which Blake found in the integrating mythology of Hebraic culture, with the vitality of its union of body, mind and spirit.

[1] Milton 28. 46--49.

[2] Blake's Chaucer - Second Prospectus, Erdman, p.558. See John Dryden's "Preface to the Fables," 1700.

One other tradition, a tradition growing directly out of Biblical prophecy, needs to be mentioned at this point; the tradition of millenarianism. As Norman Cohn points out in his study of revolutionary millenarians in the Middle Ages, millenarianism came to have a much wider range of reference than its original meaning, when it referred to "one variant of Christian eschatology", the belief "that after his Second Coming Christ would establish a messianic kingdom on earth and would reign over it for a thousand years before the Last Judgement." [1] E.J. Hobsbawn refers to the essence of millenarianism as "the hope of a complete and radical change in the world which will be reflected in the millenium, a world shorn of all its present deficiencies."[2] Blake would appear to have made conscious use of this tradition in the way in which, as A.L. Morton describes, "under the stimulus of revolution, Jerusalem and Babylon develop from religious symbols - which they had always been - into social and political symbols."[3] Hobsbawm sees two distinctive types of millenarianism, which he describes as "modern secular revolutionism" and "Judeo-Christian messianism." Blake is closely connected with both. In so far as modern revolutionism looks to the

[1] The Pursuit of the Millenium, 1957, 3rd edition 1970, p. 13.

[2] Primitive Rebels, Manchester, 1959, p. 57.

[3] The Everlasting Gospel, 1958, p. 57.

French Revolution for its pattern,[1] Blake's early enthusiasm for the Revolution led him to adopt the language of religious apocalyptic to express this enthusiasm. In turning away from this belief in political revolutionism, at least to the extent that he could no longer see it as an instant solution to human problems in his later poetry, Blake turned nearer to what Hobsbawm calls "the 'pure' millenarian movement" whose followers expect the revolution to make itself, with their part being to prepare themselves in response to prophetic encouragement. Bearing in mind Hobsbawm's threefold characterization of typical European old-fashioned millenarianism, a study of Blake's later poetry reveals, on the one hand, how much Blake made use of this tradition by adopting its language and thought-patterns, and on the other hand, his distinctness from this tradition in terms of what may justly be called his humanism. Hobsbawm's three characteristics are rejection of the present, evil world, with a passionate longing for a better one, "in a word, revolutionism", "a fairly standardized 'ideology' of the chiliastic type", and "a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about." Many critics have found the last of these characteristics particularly true of Jerusalem. It is part of my purpose in this thesis to show that Blake is far from vague about

[1] Hobsbawm, op.cit., p. 58.

his metaphorical eschatology.[1] His relationship to the millenarian tradition at this point has much in common with the utopianism which Hobsbawm describes as "probably a necessary social device for generating the superhuman efforts without which no major revolution is achieved."[2]

Blake's use of and yet separation from this millenarian tradition is even clearer if we adopt Cohn's five fundamentals of millenarian movements, whose picture of salvation he describes as collective, terrestial, imminent, total, and miraculous.[3] In entitling his poem Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion Blake sets it firmly within this millenarian context, for the establishment of the new Jerusalem on earth was the fervent hope of all millenarians. Blake's "revolutionism" is certainly collective and terrestial, but can hardly be described as imminent, total, or miraculous. It is here that we see the identity which Blake seeks with the prophets in his appropriation of religious language, in

[1] See pp. 134--71 below.

[2] Hobsbawm, op.cit., pp. 60--61.

[3] Cohn, op.cit., p. 13. In his essay, "William Blake, The Prince of the Hebrews, and the Woman Clothed with the Sun", William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips, Oxford, 1973, pp. 260--93, Morton Paley discusses the relation between Richard Brothers, Joanna Southcott, and Blake's works, which Paley sees as "deeply imbued with the idea of the Millenium."

Harold Bloom's words, "straining to be dissolved." [1] The extent of that identity with Ezekiel in particular, and the point at which the identity becomes dissolved, is the theme of my next chapter.

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy", p. 20.

CHAPTER V.

1. Eighteenth Century Views of Ezekiel.

The extent to which Blake's poetry in permeated with Biblical images and allusions has increasingly been recognized and documented, and commentators have often noted that in Jerusalem Blake draws frequently on the Book of Ezekiel for many of his most basic and recurring images. Swinburne sees Blake "taking with all his might of mental nerve and strain of excitable spirit to a perusal and reperusal of such books as Job and Ezekiel".[1] More recently, Harold Bloom has referred to the structural similarities between the two books, a comparison which will concern us later, when he writes of Jerusalem as "a poem whose structure takes Ezekiel's book as its model."[2] It is not my intention to develop Bloom's claim in order to suggest that Ezekiel's book serves as a model for Jerusalem in any extended sense, but rather to emphasize its importance as an influence on Blake's thinking, and specifically, on the style, the structure, and many of the themes of Jerusalem. There is no formal attempt to model his poem on Ezekiel in Jerusalem, except perhaps in terms of the overall structure of the work, but there is a

[1] William Blake - A Critical Essay, 1868.

[2] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy," Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20, p.6.

strong impression that Blake saw himself in his age in a situation very similar to that of the exiled prophet, and his work in some ways analogous to the visions of Nebuchadnezzar's captive. Before examining the similarities between the two books more closely, it will be useful to outline some of the attitudes towards Ezekiel in the eighteenth century, with which Blake would probably have been familiar.

In one important respect, Robert Lowth's comments on the Book of Ezekiel in his Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews[1] have a marked similarity to much of the criticism of Jerusalem which I have outlined in the second chapter of this thesis, in that Lowth tends to underestimate the degree of premeditated art and design in Ezekiel, just as critics of Jerusalem have overestimated the vehemence and passion of the poem. Harold Bloom expresses precisely this too often unquestioned assumption about both works when he writes that "Both books also share a harsh plain style, suitable for works addressed to peoples in captivity."[2] Similarly, Lowth describes Ezekiel in precisely the same terms that Gilchrist used to describe the Blake of the later books, when he suggests that Ezekiel is "more of the orator than the poet."[3] It is one of the aims of my thesis to show

1 2 vols., trans. G. Gregory, 1787.

2 Bloom, op.cit., p. 7.

3 Lowth, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 217.

that assumptions about the harshness of the poetry of Jerusalem have been greatly overstated, and also to suggest that Blake recognized a much greater degree of premeditated design in Ezekiel than many of the Biblical commentators of his time.

Lowth's reading of Ezekiel leads him to the view that while Ezekiel "is much inferior to Jeremiah in elegance," he is "not even excelled by Isaiah" when it comes to sublimity. However, Ezekiel's use of the sublime is much less controlled and directed than Isaiah's. Ezekiel "is deep, vehement, tragical; the only sensation he affects to excite is the terrible: his sentiments are elevated, fervid, full of fire, indignant; his imagery is crowded, magnificent, terrific, sometimes almost to disgust; his language is pompous, solemn, austere, rough, and at times unpolished: he employs frequent repetitions, not for the sake of grace or elegance, but from the vehemence of passion and indignation." We could be forgiven for forgetting that this was the view of an eighteenth century Biblical scholar on Ezekiel, rather than a later critic on Blake. The comparison with much criticism of Jerusalem is inescapable. Lowth continues by asserting that by nature Ezekiel was particularly adapted to "the forcible, the impetuous, the great and solemn." If there is obscurity in his work, it does not lie in his language, but "in the nature of the subject", for "Visions . . . are necessarily dark

and confused." He concludes that "Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as far as relates to style, may be said to hold the same rank among the Hebrews, as Homer, Simonides, and Aeschylus among the Greeks."[1]

Some of J.D. Michaelis's notes to Lowth's lectures are included in Gregory's 1787 translation, and it may well have been the case that Michaelis's long note to Lowth's comments on Ezekiel would have helped the perceptive reader find a balance between two such opposed views. Michaelis, like Lowth, perhaps overstates his point when he writes that "I can by no means bring myself to agree with our author. So far from esteeming Ezekiel equal to Isaiah in sublimity, I am inclined rather to think, that he displays more art and luxuriance in amplifying and decorating his subject than is consistent with the poetical fervour, or indeed with true sublimity."[2] Ezekiel's imagination, according to Michaelis, combines "accuracy and copiousness," and he has the gift of amplifying adopted images "with singular ingenuity." He shows "novelty and variety, great fertility of genius", in his use of an imagination which is above all inclusive, making use of everything that comes to hand. In some of these respects Michaelis could well have been speaking of the Blake of Jerusalem, who has the same power of vivifying adopted

[1] ibid., Vol.2, pp. 89--94.

[2] ibid., Vol.2, pp. 89--93.

images, and of finding the raw materials for poetry in whatever lies to hand, and of incorporating it into his own poetic vision.

Even more helpful for our present purposes is William Newcome's study, published in 1788, entitled An Attempt towards an Improved Version, A Metrical Arrangement, and An Explanation of the Prophet Ezekiel.[1] Newcome recognizes Ezekiel's mastery of various poetic styles, and writes of how at times he seeks to awaken the exiles with "flowing and insinuating eloquence", while at other times he calls upon them, assuming "a more vehement tone, to awe and alarm them by heightened scenes of calamity and terror."[2] He quotes with approval from Grotius's commentary on Ezekiel that "he may deservedly be compared with Homer, on account of his beautiful conceptions, his illustrious comparisons, and his extensive knowledge of various matters." Much of Ezekiel's appeal for Blake may well have been in what Newcome calls his firm and vigorous language and his strong masculine poetry, though as in Jerusalem, vigour is combined with "mild and affectionate exhortation."

In the course of his introduction Newcome quotes

[1] Dublin , 1788.

[2] ibid., p.8.

extensively from Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament,[1] and Newcome's own introduction to the book owes much to Eichhorn's perceptive selection of those qualities which distinguish Ezekiel's poetic gifts from the other Biblical prophets. Eichhorn recognizes that while Ezekiel reveals originality and inexhaustible imagination, the early visions are "so accurately polished, and demanded so much art to give them their last perfection and proportion, that they cannot possibly be an unpremeditated work." While "no other prophet has given so free a course to his imagination", an imagination which enabled him to achieve "high extasies, such as the Greek and Roman poets pretended to in their flights of enthusiasm", at the same time his work is "full of artificial and elaborate plans." Of Ezekiel's concern with minute particulars in his work, Eichhorn writes that "he minutely distinguishes everything in its smallest parts", and "however numerous the fictions of Ezekiel are, they all appear in a magnificent dress, and each in its peculiar splendid one", reminding us of Blake's words in Jerusalem that:

> In Great Eternity, every particular Form gives forth or Emanates
> Its own peculair Light, & the Form is the Divine Vision
> And the Light in his Garment. [2]

In 1801, just preceeding Blake's work on his own Jerusalem, Richard Brothers, "preordained to be the King

[1] 3 vols., Leipsig, 1783.
[2] Jerusalem 54. 1--3.

and Restorer of the Jews", and by command of God, published A Description of Jerusalem, where he develops the plan of Jerusalem as described by Ezekiel in Chapters 40--48. In comparison, Blake's claims in the first prose preface to his poem, that he too was writing by command of God, are an attempt, not only, as we have seen, to establish his poem's position in the Miltonic epic tradition, but also to bring some sanity to the whole question of millenarian speculation that was rife towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Brothers claimed that the Book of Ezekiel had been "carefully kept sealed as a letter, or firmly shut as a door" by divine providence, until the time of his own revelation. Blake, on the contrary, desires to show, as he had done in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, that nothing in the prophetic writings was sealed to those who had the eyes to see. Brothers's whole approach is to present himself not only as a second Ezekiel, but also as a second Messiah, in his role as announcer of the literal return of the Jews from exile to a land of their own. Blake similarly sees himself as announcer of a metaphorical return of the Jews to mental warfare, from the exile of captivity to tyranny, both corporeal and mental, but desires his reader to become his own Messiah.

Jerusalem, as Brothers describes it, is symmetrical and fourfold, following Ezekiel's plan, and is

centred around the Garden of Eden, with its forty-eight palaces, gardens and cathedrals, encircled by symmetrically arranged squares, colleges and markets. Both Brothers and Blake would probably have been familiar with Bunyan's descriptions of the city in The Holy City or The New Jerusalem,[1] where Bunyan writes of St. John's vision in the Book of Revelation that:

> when he saith the city lieth four square, it is as if he had said she lieth even with the patternor golden reed of the Word; even, I say, both in her members, doctrine, worship, and manners,

for:

> by four square, you are to understand perfection, or an answering the figures that of old did figure to us the completeness and perfection of the New Testament order.

Blake internalizes Brothers's mathematical descriptions, giving universal significance to pointless speculation.

Morton D. Paley, in his essay, "William Blake, The Prince of the Hebrews, and the Woman Clothed with the Sun",[2]

[1] 1665. In comparing Bunyan's views on the New Jerusalem with Blake's hopes for the realization of a "spiritual fourfold London", it is helpful to bear in mind Michael Phillips's suggestion that the publication of Bunyan's work immediately preceeding the Great Fire of London, which led to the necessity for rebuilding parts of the city, leading directly to the adoption of Ezekiel's fourfold plan in London's famous squares, would have been an incentive to Blake to see the city become spiritually fourfold, just as Bunyan's work was associated with the literal fourfold.

[2] William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips, Oxford, 1973, pp. 260--93.

has much that is valuable to say about the similarities between Brothers and Blake, and of Blake's relationship to "the millenarian movements of his own time."[1] Paley points out that the charge brought against Brothers in March, 1795, for which he was committed to Simmons's asylum in Islington, of "Unlawfully, maliciously, and wickedly writing, publishing, and printing various fantastical prophecies, with intent to cause dissension and other disturbances within the realm, contrary to the Statute", was "one to disquiet any prophet against empire." It followed publication of Brothers's A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times, in which he denounced the war with France, and warned of England's downfall, and Paley points out that the charge could easily have been applied to Blake as well as Brothers.

Of the similarities between the two writers, Paley points out that "Both are Christian apocalyptists, seeing in the events of their own time parallels to the apocalyptic and prophetic writings of the Bible, and both interpret these writings according to their own opposition to the war against France and the establishment of Britain's colonial empire."[2] Just as in Jerusalem, "Jerusalem is named Liberty/Among the sons of Albion",[3] so Brothers writes in

[1] ibid., p.261.

[2] ibid., p.268.

[3] Jerusalem 26.

A Letter to the Subscribers for Engraving the Plans of Jerusalem, the King's Palace, the Private Palaces, College-Halls, Cathedrals, and Parliament-Houses:

It shall be the land of true liberty! And no man in it shall say with justice that he was ever oppressed by the government through the influence of the Prince. [1]

Despite similarities such as these, Paley's conclusion is undoubtedly true, when he writes that "Brothers's Jerusalem remains an unrealized fantasy; lacking symbolic extension, it now lacks meaning except as a record of failed aspiration. In contrast Golgonooza, 'Continually building & continually decaying desolate' . . . is a mental model of human reality."[2] However, as a contemporary opponent of a particular form of imperial warring, and as one who stresses the centrality of a Jerusalem characterized by liberty, based on Ezekiel's vision, Brothers's writings, while probably of little consequence to Blake in themselves, are an interesting example of the millenarian direction of some of the thought of his time, and its rootedness in the visions of Ezekiel.

The general attitude towards the Book of Ezekiel in the eighteenth century among Biblical commentators, appears to have been governed, on the one hand, by a view of prophecy which Blake rejected, a view which searched the prophets for literal fulfilments to which they could

1 1805, p.41.

2 Paley, op.cit., pp. 278--79.

point as proof of Christianity, just as Bishop Watson does in his An Apology for the Bible, and on the other hand, by the concept of sublimity, summed up in Lowth's comments on the book. In his study, History the Interpreter of Prophecy,[1] Henry Kett quotes with approval Robert Gray's Lowthian description of the language of prophecy in Gray's A Key to the Old Testament and Apocrypha,[2] where he writes that "the language of Prophecy is remarkable for its magnificence . . . their style in general may be characterized, as strong, animated, and impressive. Its ornaments are derived not from accumulation of epithet, or laboured harmony; but from the real grandeur of its images, and the majestic force of its expressions." Gray continues, asserting that "the masculine and indignant spirit of the Prophets led them to adopt the most energetic and descriptive expressions. No style is perhaps so highly figurative as that of the Prophets."[3] When writing of Ezekiel's style, Gray offers nothing more than a paraphrase of Lowth's characterization of the prophet's language, though he points out, as Blake too must have been aware, that "the name of Ezekiel was happily expressive of that inspired confidence and fortitude which he displayed."[4]

[1] 3 vols., Oxford, 1799.

[2] Second edition, 1791.

[3] ibid., p.351.

[4] ibid., p.391.

The terms in which William Warburton speaks of Ezekiel in The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated,[1] as the prophet of "inspired imagination," of sublimity, and of graphic and vivid, detailed visionary description, are consistently recurring terms in eighteenth century studies of Ezekiel's book. The presentation of him as a prophet with a message of urgency, an inclusive imagination, a concern with precise detail, powers of vivid description and of a variety of poetic styles, driven by his sense of calling and of isolation to give form to his passions, are all of importance in understanding Blake's formulation of his own situation and poetic intentions. In examining closely the extent to which Ezekiel stands behind Blake's achievement in Jerusalem, I intend to compare the two books in terms of the situation and approach of the writers, the major themes which are developed, and the structure, imagery and language of the poetry.

[1] 1738.

2. Similarities in Situation and Approach.

Jerusalem has much in common with the Book of Ezekiel from the point of view of what it reveals about the situation of the poet, the situation to which he addresses his poem, and his approach to his work. Apart from the major similarity in the overall design of the work, which I will examine in detail in the next section, there are several other thematic concerns which also reveal the extent of Ezekiel's influence on Blake.

I have referred to Blake's debt to Ezekiel in works other than Jerusalem where relevant, of which the most notable is his conversation with the prophet in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, where both Ezekiel and Isaiah uphold the power of "honest indignation" and imaginative insight. Mention must also be made of the engraving "Ezekiel", dated 27 October 1794, subtitled "I take away from thee the Desire of thine Eyes".[1] The plate, executed from Blake's own design, a powerful presentation of the death of Ezekiel's wife, is striking evidence of the impact which Ezekiel's book made on the artist's imagination.

In his essay, "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of

[1] Ezekiel 24. 16. See Engravings by William Blake: The Separate Plates, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 1956, Plate 15.

Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy",[1] Harold Bloom writes that "Ezekiel is uniquely the prophet-in-exile, whose call and labor are altogether outside the Holy Land. Held captive in Babylon, he dies still in Babylon, under the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar, and so never sees his prophecy fulfilled."[2] Ezekiel's awareness of isolation, an isolation deriving both from his exile from the Holy Land, and from the refusal of those to whom he is sent to pay heed to his message, is c learly suggested in his commissioning at the opening of his book:

> Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.[3]

A similar sense of determination, and perhaps also of isolation, is suggested in the deletions which Blake made from the opening prose preface to Jerusalem on Plate 3, where he demonstrates a new awareness of prophetic calling, and exhibits a much tougher attitude to his reader. Blake removes various terms of endearment to the reader, and boldly foregoes what he must have seen earlier as the need to defend himself and his work from "presumptuousness or arrogance." Yet for Blake, as for Ezekiel, this awareness of prophetic responsibility never precludes inner struggles and conflicts. At the beginning of his

[1] Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

[2] ibid., p.6.

[3] Ezekiel 3. 8--9.

book, Ezekiel is told:

> And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions.[1]

A lonely conflict is suggested not only by this, but by the repeated encouragements which Ezekiel received:

> So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.[2]

Blake's conflicts are, of course, a central part of Jerusalem, in that the poet, in the figure of Los, is subject to continual temptations to despair on the one hand, and uncreative wrath on the other, both spectrous forms of his own ego. Albion's resurrection to a fuller life, like Israel's in Ezekiel, depends largely on the poet's ability to overcome such temptations, to refuse uncreative and selfish diversions, and to persist in the midst of his most extreme conflicts. Blake learned from Ezekiel the priority of courageous endurance as an essential part of the poet's reaction to circumstances of isolation and opposition.

Recognition of this responsibility presupposes recognition of another priority, the priority of the word to bring about the new Jerusalem. In the case of Ezekiel, the word is also the deed, in that his symbolic actions

[1] ibid., 2. 6.

[2] ibid., 33. 7.

have the same function of awakening the onlooker into fresh perception of the truth. The word, by which "the worlds were framed",[1] a concept which is central to Biblical thought, as the opening of Genesis and of St. John's Gospel shows, has the creative power to bring about decisive change, to significantly alter the direction of history. M.H. Abrams writes in his recent study, Natural Supernaturalism, of the nature of Biblical history as cyclical and dramatic, with key events of which intervening episodes are echoes, the key events being those of creation, fall, incarnation, redemption and parousia.[2] It is important to go on to point out how each of these key events is closely associated with the creativeness of the word, the word which created the world, when "God said . . . and it was so";[3] the word by which Eve was deceived and caused to fall; the word which "was made flesh";[4] the word which effected redemption, for "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you";[5] the word by which all things are upheld,[6] and which gives assurance of a new heaven and a new earth.[7]

[1] Hebrews 11. 3.

[2] 1971, p.

[3] Genesis 1. 7.

[4] St. John's Gospel 1. 14.

[5] ibid., 15. 3.

[6] Hebrews 1. 3.

[7] Revelation 17. 17.

Ezekiel's commission is to use what Blake, in Jerusalem, recognizes as "all-powerful human words":[1]

> Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.[2]

When Albion rises in Jerusalem, in prophetic and creative wrath, it is "speaking the words of Eternity in human forms".[3]

Not only is the prophet in exile in Ezekiel, but he addresses himself to a people in exile too in Babylon, in danger of complete assimilation into their environment; a situation calling for a vision of apocalyptic renewal as inclusive as the vision in the valley of bones:

> Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say: 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are clean cut off from our parts. Therefore prophesy.' [4]

Jerusalem, Blake's most "consolidated and extended Work"[5], was set forth as such a vision. Los perfects the spaces of Erin:

1 Jerusalem 24. 1.

2 Ezekiel 3. 4.

3 Jerusalem 95. 9.

4 Ezekiel 37. 11--12.

5 Jerusalem 3.

. . . . . compelling the harsh Spectre
Into the Furnaces & into the valleys of the Anvils of Death
And into the mountains of the Anvils & of the heavy Hammers
Till he should bring the Sons & Daughters of Jerusalem to be
The Sons and Daughters of Los.[1]

At the beginning of the poem the Saviour warns against the cruelties of Babylon, the mother of harlots,[2] with its worship of Vala, goddess of nature,[3] its "religion hid in war",[4] and its aspiring imperialism, which accumulate until they bring about the collapse of the whole civilization. The black water of decay [5] is associated with the sexual perversions of war and sacrifice, when, under the dominion of woman, with her "stern demands of Right and Duty instead of Liberty",[6] man is forced to find satisfaction in war:

. . . . . I am drunk with unsatiated love;
I must rush again to War: for the Virgin has frownd & refused[7]

and associated too with nature worship,[8] revealing itself

[1] ibid., 9. 35. - 10. 4.

[2] Revelation 17. 5.

[3] Jerusalem 18. 29.

[4] ibid., 75. 20.

[5] ibid., 4. 10.

[6] ibid., 22. 11.

[7] ibid., 68. 61--62.

[8] ibid., 18. 30. and Ezekiel 8. 14.

in the blessing given by religion to the burying alive of all emanations:

> Every emanative joy forbidden as a crime
> And the Emanations buried alive in the earth
> with pomp of religion.[1]

The painstakingly precise detail of Blake's description of the building of the city of Golgonooza, when seen alongside Ezekiel's even fuller description of the new temple and new Jerusalem, clearly suggests the centrality of the reality of exile. Ezekiel provides a detailed picture of home for the exiles both to encourage and awaken desire in them. Blake adopts this technique for similar reasons. His audience is exiled from its true home, its Jerusalem of social and artistic liberty, the freedom of the human imagination to create the world in human form, and Blake tries to awaken a longing for the place in which they will find their true identity. In Ezekiel, the close relationship between the people and the very contours of Jerusalem has been lost, though the prophet promises restoration:

> I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginning.[2]

In Jerusalem, Albion's children "exiled from his breast pass to and fro before him",[3] Jerusalem herself is "shut . . .

[1] ibid., 9. 14--15.

[2] Ezekiel 36. 11.

[3] Jerusalem 19. 1.

into the winter of human life",[1] and Albion has turned away "down the valleys dark."[2] However, Blake's promise of restoration is one which embraces even those whose advocation of passivity, abstraction, empiricism and natural religion has caused the exile:

> The innumerable Chariots of the Almighty appeard in Heaven
> And Bacon & Newton & Locke & Milton & Shakespear & Chaucer.[3]

Both Blake and Ezekiel, however, warn against the danger of national collapse, and in similar terms. Ezekiel, seeing that "these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face",[4] speaks against the background of a situation where:

> the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.[5]

Blake sees the same reality:

> I saw a disease forming a body of death around the Lamb
> Of God, to destroy Jerusalem & to devour the body of Albion.
> By war & stratagem to win the labour of the husbandman.[6]

[1] ibid., 20. 5.

[2] ibid., 4. 22.

[3] ibid., 98. 8--9.

[4] Ezekiel 14. 3.

[5] ibid., 7. 23.

[6] Jerusalem 9. 9--11.

Ezekiel stands in conscious opposition to the false and foolish prophets who spoke of peace when there was no peace, and who were undermining the nation with their delusions and false hopes of security:

> You have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel, to stand in battle in the day of the Lord.[1]

This situation was similar to Blake's, who saw the period from 1660 to 1760 as in many ways an interruption of the native English tradition, with poetry having fallen into the complacency of the "languid strings" and "tinkling rhimes and elegances terse" of late Augustan verse, and the foundation of empire given over to self-righteous warmongering. Of that "one Class of Men", among whom was Dr. Trusler, "fall'n out with the Spiritual World",[2] Blake writes that "Unfortunately our authors of books are among this Class."[3] These false prophets, who were often political puppets, had the double advantage of an acceptable message and a position of standing within the community. The large degree of self-awareness and of the poet's concern with the writing of his poem in Jerusalem, in the form of Los's struggles with his Spectre and with his Emanation, and his attempts to replace wrath with pity, derive ultimately from the poet's sense of himself as

[1] Ezekiel 13. 5.

[2] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

[3] Letter to Cumberland, 26 August 1799.

the spokesman for the whole of humanity, on the one hand, but in his contemporary situation, for only a small group of perceptive people, on the other, a situation forcing him constantly to greater introspection and self awareness.

Blake has much to say about the sort of vision which is necessary for such poetic work. It must be vision which is adequate for the reality of contemporary life, and it must be persevering, so that despite the claim of the prophet's enemies that "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth", Ezekiel can maintain that "there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel",[1] and Blake can write:

> And I know that This World Is a world of imagination and Vision . . . Some See Nature all Ridicule & Deformity, & by these I shall not regulate my proportions; & some Scarce see Nature at all. But to the Eyes of the man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself. [2]

Nature, like history, is the locus of God's constant activity, fully active to the man of "Spiritual Sensation".[3] Ezekiel's view of life is pervasively theocentric. All matter is permeated with life in the presence of God:

> Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. [4]

[1] Ezekiel. 12. 22--24.

[2] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

[3] ibid.

[4] Ezekiel 1. 20.

Blake's understanding of vision is similarly life-bestowing:

> What it will be Questioned when the sun rises do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty. [1]

Blake's wheels, which in Eden "in freedom revolve in harmony and peace",[2] are also spiritually animated, so that nature is made accessible to man, and the mundane thoroughly fused with the visionary, for his mythology organizes all things as partaking of the one life of the imagination, so that subjects, rather than objects, confront one another in Jerusalem. Such vision in addressed to the powers of the intellect, integrating the minute particulars of concrete perception, unlike the hidden and divisive moral allegory, concealed within the tabernacle in the Covering Cherub's "devouring Stomach",[3] signifying those who would read only allegories of piety and virtue from the Bible.

It is important to recognize that Blake's interpretation of Ezekiel is governed by his insistence on internalizing and mythologizing the prophet's visions. Blake's vision is one which reconciles all contraries, and which leads ultimately, as the final plates of Jerusalem reveal,

1 "A Vision of the Last Judgment", p.92.

2 Jerusalem 15. 19--20.

3 ibid., 89. 43--45.

to a coming together of all forces in one identity. Harold Bloom is right to point out that Ezekiel holds firmly to antithesis, "the dualism of God and man, which is the only dualism sanctioned by the prophets."[1] In Ezekiel, this dualism leads not to identity, but either to confrontation or to unity.

The same contrast is clear if we examine each poet's attitude to action. In his essay, "The Failure of Martin Heidegger",[2] Julius Seelye Bixler writes of Heidegger that "in a mood that reminds us of Kierkegaard, he remarks that the great question is whether man will achieve Existenz or will let himself fall back into Verfallenheit, i.e., the anonymous life of the mass."[3] It is in a similar state of Verfallenheit that we find Albion at the beginning of Jerusalem. In the ironic inscription above the archway on the first plate of the poem, Blake writes of that pre-existent state of pleasant repose in which Albion is entombed:

> There is a Void, outside of Existence, which if enterd into
> Englobes itself & becomes a Womb, such was Albion's Couch
> A pleasant Shadow of Repose calld Albion's lovely Land. [4]

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy," Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), p. 20.

[2] The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 56 (1963), 121--43.

[3] ibid., p.129.

[4] Jerusalem 1.

Albion has been lured into a state of passivity in which he is no longer master of his own circumstances, for "Satan is the State of Death & not a Human Existence",[1] and he is left only with the perversion of action which introduces Chapter Two:

> Every ornament of perfection, and every labour of love,
> In all the Garden of Eden, & in all the golden mountains
> Was become an envied horror, and a remembrance of jealousy:
> And every Act a Crime, and Albion the punisher & judge.[2]

The image of the truly human in Jerusalem is an image of man in action,

> . . . . . creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect
> Creating Space, Creating Time,[3]

similar to Heidegger's emphasis on the realization of individuality through meeting those possibilities which characterize our existence. As Bixler writes, "man's freedom takes on a quality of creation ex nihilo which makes man into a sort of Creator with a capital C, and almost a God on his own account."[4] We may illustrate this by reference to Blake's use of the stock response in his poem. C.S. Lewis observes perceptively that

[1] ibid., 49. 67.

[2] ibid., 28. 1--4.

[3] ibid., 98. 30--31.

[4] Bixler. op.cit.. p. 141.

"the old critics were quite right when they said that poetry 'instructed by delighting,' for poetry was formerly one of the means whereby each new generation learned, not to copy, but by copying to make, the good Stock responses."[1] However, in Jerusalem it is the Spectre who most often plays on stock responses, on this occasion to humility and power:

> But the Spectre like a hoar frost & a Mildew rose over Albion
> Saying, I am God O Sons of Men; I am your Rational Power;
> Am I not Bacon & Newton & Locke who teach Humility to Man.[2]

Blake's view of action, then, is directly opposed to the dominion of Verfallenheit in which man is afraid to stand alone, and consists in the courage to assert truly human responses. Jerusalem is concerned with the liberation of creative potential, which, for Los, comes about as he frees himself both from his own selfhood, and from the fixed systems of the natural order. This is the theme of the opening of the poem, with its contrast between the poet who sleeps, but awakes to hear the divine voice, and Albion, who refuses to awake from the Sleep of Ulro into the realization of potential.

Such openness to possibility may well be the sort of

[1] A Preface to Paradise Lost, 1942, p.57.

[2] Jerusalem 54. 15--17.

action which Goethe's Faust comes to see as pre-eminent:

> Mir hilft der Geist, auf einmal seh ich Rat
> Und schreibe getrost: Im Anfang war die Tat [1]

and which leads directly to Nietzsche's Übermensch, by way of the emphasis in Western humanism on the working and acting out of one's own salvation, and indeed may seem close to the prophetic stance of the isolated individual, willing to endure the reproach of the crowd:

> Among innumerable false unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified.[2]

However the true approach to action among the Biblical prophets consists in a receptivity and response to initiative, rather than the taking of initiative:

> Commit your way to the Lord;
> Trust in him, and he will act. [3]

In the same way, Ezekiel speaks and acts in response to the divine initiative:

So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit.[4]

To point up this contrast serves to underline Bloom's warning that "it hardly seems right that his [Blake's] expositors should claim his creative freedom at redefinition

[1] Faust. ll. 1236--37.

[2] Paradise Lost, v 898-99.

[3] Psalm 37. 5.

[4] Ezekiel 3. 14.

of accepted terms. If the theologians of the different orthodoxies are true Christians, then Blake is not, and it seems more accurate to name him an apocalyptic humanist."[1]

Much of the motivation for Ezekiel's determined response to the divine call grew out of his concern at the fall of Jerusalem, while in Blake's poem, the building of Babylon involves the casting out of Jerusalem, "named Liberty/Among the Sons of Albion",[2] and thus is built on the desolation of humanity:

> The walls of Babylon are Souls of Men: her Gates the Groans
> Of Nations: her Towers are the Miseries of once happy Families.[3]

Jerusalem, the "Emanative portion" of every man, that joins man to man,[4] once enjoyed a position of centrality in human affairs, as the Lamb reminds her:

> I gave thee liberty and life O lovely Jerusalem
> And thou hast bound me down upon the Stems of Vegetation
> I gave thee Sheep-walks upon the Spanish Mountains Jerusalem
> I gave thee Priam's City and the Isles of Grecia lovely![5]

The fall of Jerusalem which Ezekiel prophesied was from a similar position:

[1] Blake's Apocalypse, 1963, p. 372.

[2] Jerusalem 18. 11 ff., and 26.

[3] ibid., 24. 31--32.

[4] ibid., 39. 38--39.

[5] ibid., 60. 10--13.

This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.[1]

The despair of Jerusalem in the age of Deism left England abandoned, just as Israel was by the departure of the glory of God from the city:

> Then all the Males combined into One Male & every one
> Became a ravening eating Cancer growing in the Female
> A Polypus of Roots of Reasoning Doubt Despair & Death.
> Going forth & returning from Albion's Rocks to Canaan:
> Devouring Jerusalem from every Nation of the Earth.[2]

Although she often appears in Jerusalem as a Christ-figure,[3] bound upon an oak of weeping,[4] whose rejection is the result of Albion's delusion of a God afar off, much of Jerusalem's suffering, like Albion's, is self-inflicted:

> Why wilt thou rend thyself apart, Jerusalem?
> And build this Babylon & sacrifice in secret Groves.[5]

Her rejection, with her former joy become despair, is partly caused by the same wilful self-destruction which causes Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time to become no longer admired for her beauty, but "a reproach and a taunt" in the sight of all.[6]

[1] Ezekiel 5. 5.

[2] Jerusalem 69. 1--5.

[3] ibid., 23.

[4] ibid., 3.

[5] ibid., 60. 22--23.

[6] Ezekiel 5. 15.

The situation which Blake finds is one in which the universality of vision found in the English tradition through Chaucer, Spenser and Milton, and which he saw represented in Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, full of eyes,[1] has been replaced by the idolatry of empiricism. The warning against idolatry in Psalm 115, that "they that make them are like unto them", and recalled in the fate of the devils in Paradise Lost, "for what they saw/ they felt themselves now changing",[2] is incorporated in Blake's description of the fate of fallen mankind in the age of Deism, where "they became what they beheld",[3] bounded by the senses, and unfit for the land of promise. The result of this is a situation precisely parallel to that described by Martin Buber in his book, The Eclipse of God,[4] where he writes of the Hebrews in Old Testament times that:

> When a sanctification of the people as a people is no longer recognized or no longer taken seriously, then the peoples accept the new faith not as peoples, but as collections of individuals.[5]

Blake's purpose is to counteract such divisions, for as the Eternal Man affirms in The Four Zoas:

[1] Ezekiel 1. 18.

[2] Paradise Lost, x, 540--41.

[3] Jerusalem 30. 54.

[4] New York, 1952.

[5] ibid., p. 106.

Not for ourselves, but for the Eternal Family we live.
Man liveth not by self alone, but in his brother's face.
Each shall behold the Eternal Father, & love & joy abound.[1]

Harold Bloom writes of the "parallel emphases upon individual responsibility and self-purgation" in Jerusalem and Ezekiel, in his essay to which I referred earlier,[2] enlarging upon his claim in his Commentary to Erdman's edition of Blake's works, that "Ezekiel was the first prophet to put aside the tradition of collective guilt and to insist upon an individual prophetic stance for salvation. His Holy remnant is a community, but he always insists upon them as individuals. . . . The personal struggle of Jerusalem between the Los in Blake and the Spectre in Blake, is more in the lonely tradition of Ezekiel than in that of the other prophets." In this Bloom follows Martin Buber's judgment in The Prophetic Faith where he writes of how "Jeremiah identifies himself in moments of inspiration with the people, but because he really bears the people within himself", whereas Ezekiel was a man apart. "Ezekiel individualizes the prophetic alternative." He sees the community, writes Buber, "as a multitude of individuals, each one of whom is responsible before God for himself alone":[3]

[1] The Four Zoas 9. 637--39.

[2] Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

[3] New York, 1960, p.186.

> The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son.[1]

Rudolf Otto writes in similar terms in his Religious Essays,[2] of how "Jeremiah and Ezekiel prepare the way for the transition from a tribal and national religion to the religion of the individual." While such judgments may be true of Ezekiel's historical significance, the primary emphasis remains on the community, even when the prophet is distinguishing belonging to Israel from belonging to the true people of God. It is the responsibility of each generation for its own failures which Ezekiel emphasizes, and it is the nation which is threatened by such failures, just as, beyond the fall of the present order, his vision remains a national one, of a renewed religion and culture:

> I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm.[3]

In Jerusalem, as in the passage quoted earlier from The Four Zoas, and as in Ezekiel, identity is affirmed not in contrast to the other, for that was what caused Urizen to fall in the Book of Urizen:

[1] Ezekiel 18. 20.

[2] "History of Religion", 1931.

[3] Ezekiel 20. 34.

> Dark revolving in silent activity:
> Unseen in tormenting passions;
> An activity unknown and horrible;
> A self-contemplating shadow,
> In enormous labours occupied [1]

but in the communion which is the distinctiveness of eternity:

> In great Eternity, every particular Form gives forth or Emanates
> Its own peculiar Light, & the form is the Divine Vision
> And the Light is his Garment. This is Jerusalem in every man. [2]

Both Blake and Ezekiel maintain a close link between personal and social regeneration, aware that only a thoroughly purged culture is sufficient foundation for national renewal; a culture governed by eternal realities. In Jerusalem this involves the transformation of all things, nature and man, into a truly human form, for human redemption is inseparable from the transformation of the whole natural world, and in Ezekiel a turning away from the bondage of evil to a new freedom and a new humanity:

> Behold I . . . will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt, to make them fly.[3]

> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.[4]

[1] Book of Urizen 3. 18--22.

[2] Jerusalem 54. 1--3.

[3] Ezekiel 13. 20.

[4] ibid., 36. 26.

Just as Albion will be recovered from the sleep of Ulro and eternal death in Jerusalem, and the despair of Jerusalem turned into "Visions in new Expanses",[1] so the whole nation will be revived to new life in Ezekiel:

> O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.[2]

In finding so many analogues to his own situation and ambitions in the Book of Ezekiel, Blake seeks finally to affirm the same fusion of social and cultural aspirations in a common religious and national life, which the final chapters of Ezekiel envisage for Israel.

[1] Jerusalem 98. 29--30.

[2] Ezekiel 37. 12.

3. Structure and Design.

The question of the structure of *Jerusalem* has often been clouded by attempts to treat the question in isolation, often resulting in the imposition of a formal structure on the poem. In this discussion of the structure of *Jerusalem* I want to treat it not as an abstraction from the central concerns of the poem, but as an integral part of those concerns. First, it will be helpful to summarize the more significant studies of *Jerusalem's* structure, which throw light on Blake's fourfold arrangement of his poem, and in doing so, to suggest wherein they fall short of an adequate description of Blake's poetic design.

Northrop Frye, in his *Fearful Symmetry,* points to the dialectical arrangement of the movement within each chapter. He suggests that the first chapter sets the fall of man over against the imaginative vision of Golgonooza, the building of Los. This leads directly to the struggle of man in the fallen world, which constitutes human history, in Chapter Two, and at the same time, to the evolution of the Bible. The redemption provided by the divine man, Jesus, is opposed by Deistic resistance in Chapter Three, but the epiphany of Anti-Christ leads to the apocalyptic revelation of the truly human form in the final chapter. It would seem to be beyond dispute that these conflicts of contraries are in fact present in the poem, and provide

the progressive movement that leads to the identification of all human forms at the end. Frye's interpretation reveals the orderly and methodical arrangement of the work, but only in the most general terms, and hardly sufficiently to forestall W.H. Stevenson's criticism that "most of Jerusalem is padding", puffed up to the required size to disguise the fact that it does not contain anything like sufficient material. [1]

In his acknowledgements for A Blake Dictionary,[2] S. Foster Damon refers to Karl Kiralis as "discoverer of the structure of Jerusalem"; a structure which, in his essay, "The Theme and Structure of William Blake's Jerusalem",[3] Kiralis finds exemplified in Blake's words on Plate 98, where he writes of the conversation of the living creatures, the Zoas, in a passage of "interfolded growth";

> And they conversed together in Visionary forms
> dramatic which bright
> Redounded from their Tongues in thunderous
> majesty, in Visions
> In new Expanses, creating exemplars of Memory
> & of Intellect
> Creating Space, Creating Time according to the
> wonders Divine
> Of Human Imagination, throughout all the Three
> Regions immense
> Of Childhood, Manhood, and Old Age. [4]

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem", Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), 254--64.

[2] New York, 1965.

[3] English Literary History, 23 (1956), 127--43.

[4] Jerusalem 98, 28--33.

Kiralis sees the form of Jerusalem as both visionary and dramatic: visionary, because "the old classical, religious, and philosophical symbolism had for Blake become too closely associated with the shadowy world, the world of death, Ulro," and dramatic, because Blake's actors are so frequently placed in direct opposition, both externally and internally. The creation of "exemplars of Memory & of Intellect", or archetypes, as Kiralis calls them, is the work of such visionary and dramatic forms, as is the recreation of time and space, prisoners of the world of mortality, which must be transformed in order to be set free for the imagination.

Having prepared the way, Kiralis goes on to present his basic thesis of the structure of the poem. Chapter One, addressed "To the Public", is a general introduction, a prelude or overture in which the fall, and the forces which must redeem man, are outlined, leading directly to the call to Jesus to establish order by the creation of states, with which the chapter ends:

> Descend O Lamb of God & take away the imputation of sin
> By the Creation of States & the deliverance of Individuals Evermore Amen. [1]

Chapters Two, Three and Four present the philosophical errors of states which must be passed through in the journey through Ulro, or Error. These states are the "Three Regions immense/Of Childhood, Manhood, and Old Age."[2]

[1] ibid., 25. 12--13.

[2] ibid., 98, 32--33.

Judaism corresponds to Childhood, Deism to Manhood, and Christianity either to the Old Age of maturity, if its potential is realised, or the Old Age of senility, if not.

Each system builds on the ruins of the preceeding one. The call for the creation of states is fulfilled in Chapter Two, a chapter which itself ends with a call to the Lamb of God to remove all sense of guilt:

> Come O thou Lamb of God and take away the remembrance of Sin

for:

> To record the Sin for a reproach: to let the Sun go down
> In a remembrance of the Sin: is a Woe & a Horror! [1]

This call is answered in Joseph's awakening to "the Continual Forgiveness of Sins" on Plate 61. The revelation of the twenty seven Churches, with which Chapter Three ends, prepares the way for the movement into "Eternity in Time & Space",[2] which becomes a reality in Chapter Four, with the awakening of Albion into "the Life of Immortality".[3]

Kiralis suggests three reasons for the correspondence of Judaism with Childhood. For the Christian church, Judaism is the earliest religion, and for the child, who like the Jew believes in strict justice, such awareness of justice must precede the learning of forgiveness. Thirdly, and most importantly, Judaism is associated with

[1] ibid., 51. 24, 27--28.

[2] ibid., 75. 22.

[3] ibid., 99. 4.

the moral law, a childlike belief in a strictly codified system of obedience.

In the movement from this childhood of supernaturalism, the direction is usually towards agnosticism, as represented by Blake in Deism. In the same way, Albion must progress from where we left him in Chapter Two, dead in the Saviour's arms.[1] In the Manhood of Deism, reason itself becomes a God:

> But the Spectre like a hoar frost & a Mildew rose over Albion
> Saying, I am God O Sons of Men! I am your Rational Power. [2]

Albion is plowed in with the dead and the living, but the Spectre rises from him to hover over the plough. From such natural religion, manhood must pass into the old age of mature Christianity, from subjection to Vala, crowned as Queen on the frontispiece to Chapter Three, to the revelation of the Female Will in the Covering Cherub, and the confession of Brittania:

> O piteous Sleep O piteous Dream! O God O God awake I have slain
> In Dreams of Chastity & Moral Law I have Murdered Albion. [3]

Such is the progressive growth of Jerusalem as Kiralis sees it. He traces too the regressive growth of Vala and the Female Will, as they gradually demand more and more obedience and recognition, out of jealous possessive-

[1] ibid., 48. 1--4.

[2] ibid., 54. 15--16.

[3] ibid., 94. 22--23.

ness, until they can be clearly revealed and cast off in the figure of the Covering Cherub.

Finally Kiralis sees the structural movement of the poem also in terms of the movement of the Zoas on Plate 98:

> . . . . . every Word & every Character
> Was Human according to the Expansion or Contraction, the Translucence or
> Opakeness of Nervous fibres such was the variation of Time & Space,
> Which vary according as the Organs of Perception vary & they walked
> To & fro in Eternity as One Man reflecting each in each & clearly seen
> And seeing: according to fitness & order.[1]

Despite the absence of any clear and definite growth in each chapter, there are reflections, in each, of various motifs, such as the moral law, fallen and unfallen worlds, war, female will, and the need to distinguish states from individuals.

The most unconvincing part of Kiralis's essay is its central thesis; the attempt to fit Chapters Two, Three and Four of the poem to the three regions of Childhood, Manhood and Old Age. There is little evidence to show that Blake had any thought of childhood in his mind when he addressed the second chapter "To the Jews", and it would appear rather Deistic of Blake to identify the strict moral absolutism of Judaism with the attitude of the child. There is much

[1] ibid., 98. 35--40.

difficulty too in identifying Manhood with the ultimate depth to which man can fall as revealed in Deism, instead of the maturity and energy which one might expect, and in the identification of Old Age with the realised potential of the Christian revelation. This view of the poem also has the effect of leaving the first chapter, "To the Public", isolated from the main structure of the work, and Kiralis relegates it to the function of a prelude, explaining that its dramatic conflicts are clearly integral in the movement of the poem as a whole. In her essay, "The Human Form Divine and the Structure of Blake's Jerusalem",[1] Anne K. Mellor, as well as pointing to the difficulty of showing the identification of each chapter to its supposed region of human life, rightly claims that there is little evidence that the three ages of man has any centrality at all in the structure of the poem.

In disagreeing with Kiralis's view of the structure of the poem, E.J. Rose writes in his essay "The Structure of Blake's Jerusalem",[2] of how Yeats saw in Blake "what others have seen in Yeats, and, eventually in Blake: the poet's incorporation of himself in the 'artifice of eternity;' his interest in not only what a symbol or what symbolic language may mean, but in how this symbolism functions as the structure of the poem." This structure

[1] Studies in English Literature, 11 (1971), 595--620.

[2] Bucknell Review, 11 (1963), 35--54.

of symbols embodies "the interior psychological struggle of man to apprehend and comprehend himself and his relationship to the cosmos and to God", and "to dramatize man's search for reality."

Rose points to the parallelistic structure of the poem. The chaos, death, disintegration, opaqueness, and contraction of Chapter Two give way to the unity, expansion, and translucence of Chapter Four. Albion, "the Vortex of the Dead",[1] is renewed to life again. War of blood becomes the mental war of intellect. The fallen perspective is most clearly revealed in the remembrance of sin with which Chapter Two closes, and which opposes the gospel of mutual forgiveness.

Rose finds Kiralis's theory forced. In fact, he writes, Chapter One comes closest to representing the Old Age of the "Sleep of Ulro", and Deism can be described as Manhood only in the sense that error has become ripe in such organized natural religion. Instead Rose sees each chapter as a state dominated by the appropriate Zoa, and marked by the attributes and imagery of that Zoa, as presented in The Gates of Paradise. Chapter One is dominated by the "Doubt Self Jealous Watry folly" of Tharmas, Chapter Two by Luvah, "Blind in Fire with Shield & Spear", Chapter Three by Urizen "On Cloudy Doubts & Reasoning Cares",

[1] Jerusalem 48. 54.

and Chapter Four by Urthona, "Struggling thro' Earth's Melancholy" into life. Unfortunately, this ingenious theory is left entirely unsupported by quotation or even reference to the text, and we are left to decide for ourselves whether or not each chapter is dominated by the imagery and attributes of the respective Zoas. Again, unfortunately, examination of the text provides no evidence to support the theory.

Los represents the opposition in the dialectical movement of the poem, Rose continues, and he is on surer ground when he suggests that the four chapters represent the psychological, sociological, rational, and visionary aspects of the dialectic respectively. The unfallen, free, infinite state of mind is opposed by the fallen, fettered, clock-timed, and spatial in Chapter One. Chapter Two sees the dominance of law, tyranny, cruelty, judgment, and Druidism over spirit, divine freedom, forgiveness, and mercy. The systematization of natural religion in Deism in Chapter Three gives way, in Chapter Four, to the consolidation and destruction of error, the preservation of the Divine Vision, and the redemption of Albion. The dialectic is expressed in recurring images of birth and death, and in the image of the wheel. The theme of the poem is Los's quest, and the movement is towards a perception of eternity, so that subject and structure are fully identified.

The strength of Rose's essay lies in his elaboration of the dialectical arrangement of the poem, an important part of the poem's inner form, first noted, as we have seen, by Frye. His indication of the different emphasis in each chapter revealing different aspects of the dialectic, is an important contribution to our understanding of the poem. A.A. Ansari, in his Book, Arrows of Intellect, comes to a similar conclusion when he writes that the structure of Jerusalem "consists in the juxtaposition of gradually sharpening antitheses." [1]

Joanne Witke, in her essay, "Jerusalem: A Synoptic Poem",[2] finds the structure of Jerusalem one of the most perplexing in literature. "Its literary form does not fit any of the commonly recognized genres, and consequently there is no clear understanding of how Blake's creation functions as a poem." The approach, she writes, has been thematic, specifying the nature of its basic ideas, as with Erdman, who sees "the motif of Jerusalem" as "peace without vengeance", or Kiralis, who understands the poem's basis to be "the progressive relationships of these three religions to 'the Three Regions immense/Of Childhood, Manhood & Old Age." In her essay Miss Witke seeks to provide a formal principle giving unity to the diversity and "seemingly unstructured characteristics" of the poem.

[1] Ansari, op.cit., p. 206.

[2] Comparative Literature, 22 (1970), 265--78.

Blake conceived of his poem in epic terms. "One meets with a solemn subject, exalted language, a supreme hero, and mighty labours having magnitude, all in accord with epic convention." However there is none of the smooth development of the classical epic, despite Blake's claim that "I have in these three years composed an immense number of verses on One Grand Theme Similar to Homer's Iliad or Milton's Paradise Lost." [1] Miss Witke sees Jerusalem as a poem full of digressions of various sorts, "elaborate explanations, reflections, laments, pleas, moral pronouncements." Unity of action, in the Aristotelian sense, can be ruled out as a defining principle.

Miss Witke suggests that this principle is found when we compare the four chapters of Jerusalem with the four gospels. Each gospel covers the same basic material in the same general order, but with frequent summaries, sermons, parables, laments, meditations, prayers, ethical commands and the like. Such structural characteristics are similar to those in Jerusalem. Again, just as each chapter of Jerusalem is addressed to a particular group of people, so each gospel is written for a specific audience. The earliest Christian apologists attempted to show that the gospels possessed a fitting harmony, sustaining and reinforcing each other with their parallel accounts of the life of Jesus, while Iranaeus was the

[1] Letter to Mr. Butts, 25 April 1803.

first to describe the different characteristics of the gospels as represented by the four-faced cherubim.

In the eighteenth century, Miss Wittke continues, the consistency of the gospels was again called into question, and instead of attempting, like Priestley and others, to prove logically the internal consistency of the gospel stories, Blake, in his fourfold poem, assumes a similarity of circumstance in two historical periods. The religion of the Pharisees, burdensome and strict, holding to legalistic, ritualistic forms, neglecting the spiritual essence of religion, encouraging hypocrisy and destroying humanity, was leading to a day of vengeance. Blake warns England in similar terms in Jerusalem. "Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination" shows the same predominance of outer form over inner spirit. Blake writes of the natural religion of the eighteenth century that, "This was the Religion of the Pharisees . . . Deism is the same & ends in the same." [1] Like the legalistic ritualism of the Pharisees, it ends in:

> Cruel hypocrisy unlike the lovely delusions of Beulah
> And cruel forms, unlike the merciful forms of Beulah's Night
> They know not why they love nor wherefore they sicken & die
> Calling that Holy Love: which is Envy Revenge & Cruelty. [2]

[1] Jerusalem 52.

[2] ibid., 17. 27--30.

Like Jesus, Los comes to reunite man with his divinity and humanity, in a new spiritual relationship arising from freely embracing love and forgiveness, to deliver man from the remote watchmaker God of Deism, similar to the "exacting God of the Pharisees." Los's appearance in the land of Albion divides the people into those who take up the way of imagination and the Divine Vision, and those who deny its reality: a national discord similar to that found in ancient Palestine. Like Jesus, Los must enter "the Door of Death for Albion's sake", [1] a door of self-sacrifice. Like the apostles, sent out to proclaim spiritual forms without a veil, Blake intends, by the exercising of "the Divine Arts of Imagination", to bring man into the realms of the Spirit, "which lives eternally."[2]

Blake uses prophetic messages of the past analogously, Miss Witke asserts, just as the gospel writers used Old Testament prophecies. The chronological arrangement of Jerusalem corresponds exactly to the arrangement of the gospels. Chapter One is addressed "To the Public", just as Matthew is addressed to the Palestinians; Chapter Two "To the Jews", as Mark to the Alexandrian Jews; Chapter Three "To the Deists", as Luke to the Colossians, with their mathematical theorizing; Chapter Four "To the Christians", as John to the church. In addition, Blake follows

[1] ibid., 1.

[2] ibid., 77.

the tradition of ascribing the image of one of the four apocalyptic animals to the gospels, according to Miss Witke. Matthew stresses the humanity of the new spirit of Christ, and its human face, against the inhumanity of the old legalism, just as Chapter One of Jerusalem stresses the importance of individual imagination in man, and the inhuman rationalism of the Deists. Mark's gospel, bearing the image of the lion, reveals the kingship and power of Jesus the Messiah, and the blind opposition of the Pharisees; a motif present in Chapter Two, with the recurring image of Los at his anvil, labouring to restore the Divine Vision. Luke emphasizes sacrifice, represented by the ox, and the forgiveness of sin, just as the story of Mary and Joseph in Chapter Three dramatizes this very concept. John's narrative, represented by the soaring, prophetic eagle, reveals the divinity of Jesus, delivering man and restoring him to eternal life, just as Chapter Four reveals Los, the "Spirit of Prophecy", accomplishing his task. In addition, one spirit unifies the four chapters of Jerusalem, just as one spirit unifies the gospels.

However, conceiving of the gospels in terms of the four faces, Blake sees only three faces in Albion's land, one of them destroyed by the mechanisms of natural religion. The face of the eagle is replaced by the cogs of the adverse wheel.[1] The prophetic spirit is supplanted, and the four-

[1] ibid., 12. 61 - 13--14.

fold nature of man must be restored in the presence of the creative imagination at the end of the poem. Blake's vision, then, reflects the harmony of the design of the poem, his purpose anticipated by his choice of form:

> The Four Living Creatures Chariots of Humanity
> Divine Incomprehensible
> In beautiful Paradise expand These are the Four
> Rivers of Paradise
> And the Four Faces of Humanity fronting the Four
> Cardinal Points Of Heaven. [1]

Jerusalem, then, is a synoptic poem, fourfold in structure, each part consistent, and all unified by one spirit. Digressions and repetitions are intrinsic to this structure, a structure of unity in diversity.

In detailing the similarities between the situation of Blake and his contemporaries in the age of Deism and that of the Jews under the Pharisees, Joanne Witke's essay is clear and convincing, though admittedly Blake is quite explicit about the comparison between Deistic oppression and Pharisaical legalism, in his prose introduction to Chapter Three. Difficulty arises not only with the tenuousness of the claim of the addressees of the gospels, but much more in attempting to force Jerusalem to correspond to this scheme. Just why the Public of Blake's first chapter should correspond to the Palestinians of Matthew's gospel is unclear. In addition there is very little evidence from the text that Blake had the four apocalyptic

[1] ibid., 98. 24--27.

animals in mind as corresponding to each of his four chapters, just as there is little evidence that he was thinking of either the "Three Regions immense" of Kiralis's theory, or the particular Zoas of Rose's essay.

The essay which contributes most to an understanding of the structure of Jerusalem, and which necessitates least forcing of the poem to fit the theory, is Anne K. Mellor's short but compact essay, "The Human Form Divine and the Structure of Blake's Jerusalem",[1] based on the realization that the figure of Christ in the poem "signifies the fusion of the finite and the infinite, a fusion which is both a mode of vision (the 'Divine Analogy') and a mode of existence (the forgiveness of sins)", so that "the structure and illustrations of Jerusalem embody this fusion." [2]

In Anne Mellor's reading of the poem, Chapter One presents the image of the human form divine which is rejected by Albion, and is addressed "To the Public" because it portrays the universal fall of man. It introduces the major characters and conflicts, and presents the epic theme, the fall and redemption of Albion and his salvation by means of a new way of seeing and a new way of living; the 'Divine Analogy' and the forgiveness of sins

[1] Mellor, op.cit.

[2] ibid., p. 595.

as suggested earlier. To this end, the Frontispiece to Chapter One presents Blake as the English artisan stepping into Albion's tomb to bring the saving light of the Divine Vision. The next three chapters present three aspects of the perversion of the human form divine which must be cast off before Albion's triumphant reawakening to life. Chapter Two reveals the perversion of the body, Chapter Three of the mind and the emotions, and Chapter Four of the imagination.

The perversion of the body is attributed to the Jews in Chapter Two, as in the Biblical story of the woman taken in adultery. The rejection of Jerusalem by Hand on Plate 28 is contrasted with what Miss Mellor sees as "the ideal feminine fusion of physicality and spirituality" on Plate 28, in turn contrasted with the alienated female body on Plates 35 and 37. Albion, losing his divine body, prefers to be "but a Worm Seventy inches long". [1] Chapter Three, "To the Deists", deals with the fall of the mind into a tyranny of law and logic. The Frontispiece, Plate 51, shows the unholy Trinity of Vala, the Female Will; Hyle, and his impotent rationalism; and Schofield, and his accusing hypocrisy. The chapter reveals, then, the three errors of moral absolutism, punishment for sin, and worship of the Female Will, in contrast to the divine use of the mind which is awareness of the Divine Vision. The corruption

[1] Jerusalem 29. 6--7.

of the imagination is appropriately addressed "To the Christians", in contrast to the potential of the Frontispiece, Plate 77, depicting the oneness of man and Christ. In his prose introduction Blake writes that "I know of no other Christianity and of no other gospel than the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination". Los's celebration of visionary creation leads to the putting off of the Covering Cherub, "the misshapen fantasy of a diseased imagination",[1] and to the realization of the potential expressed on Plate 77.

Anne Mellor's indication of the different emphasis of each chapter is perceptive, and part of the answer to the structure of the poem. In outlining my own understanding of Jerusalem, taking as a starting point Harold Bloom's suggestions as to its structure, I want to go on from where Miss Mellor stops, and show how these different emphases develop from the specific structural form of Jerusalem.

Henry Lesnick's essay, "Narrative Structure and the Antithetical Vision of Jerusalem",[2] similarly offers a sensible introduction to the structure of the poem, as far as it goes. Lesnick points to "the way in which specific plates which introduce and conclude each of the four chapters help to define the material included in each chapter", and "the extent to which the structural antithesis

[1] Mellor, op.cit., p. 608.

[2] Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, ed. D.V. Erdman and J.E. Grant, Princeton, 1970, pp. 391--412.

reflects the truly paradoxical nature of Blake's vision." [1] He sees the poem as having two main sections. The first, from Plates 1 - 88, shows "various phases of fallen existence", reflecting successive stages of the fall, while, after the revelation of the Covering Cherub on Plate 89, the second section from Plates 90 - 100 emphasizes the restoration of man. The full plate designs within the poem have a transitional function.

The first chapter, Lesnick suggests, reveals the disintegration of Albion, while the second explores the limits of Beulah. It is addressed "To the Jews", because "their culture occupies a position in history analogous to the position of this chapter in Blake's vision of history."[2] Chapter Three reveals "the nadir of man's spiritual existence", while the fourth brings about the renewal of this existence. The final plate reveals the extent to which Blake's Eden is rooted and grounded in this world. Blake's reintegrated society is not detached from the realities of life. "Even when", Lesnick writes, "in the concluding plates, the focus of the poem shifts to the restored condition of man, images of the fallen world remain an integral part of the eternal reality." [3]

[1] ibid., p. 391.

[2] ibid., p. 394.

[3] ibid., p. 405.

Lesnick's view of the poem as being thematically divided into two sections, one exploring the fall, and the other revealing a restored world, is undoubtedly part of the poem's structure. He could have gone on to point out that precisely the same thematic division is found in Ezekiel's book, with Chapters 1 - 39 dealing with the present state of Israel, a state of spiritual blindness, and Chapters 40 - 48 providing the assurance of a new quality of life in a restored nation.

In his commentary to D.V. Erdman's edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake,[1] Harold Bloom suggests that "it is possible that Blake's model for Jerusalem was the Book of Ezekiel in the same general sense that Paradise Lost was the model for The Four Zoas, and Paradise Regained for Milton." [2] There is a "broad pattern of resemblance" between the two books, and Bloom provides us with a general outline of correspondence. His suggestions are useful but inconclusive; "This general parallel between Jerusalem and Ezekiel cannot be taken too far." These suggestions are taken a step further in his essay, "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy."[3] Jerusalem has the form of a "series of firebursts, one wave of flame after another . . . appropriate to a poem whose

[1] New York, 1965.

[2] ibid., p. 843.

[3] Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

structure takes Ezekiel's book as its model." In this, his definitive poem, Blake "goes at last for prophetic form to a prophet, to the priestly orator, Ezekiel, whose situation and sorrow most closely resemble his own." In the same essay Bloom writes that "Jerusalem's quite definite form is the form of prophecy, Blake's mythologized version of the story of Ezekiel."

In his commentary Bloom suggests that Ezekiel can be divided into two equal parts of twenty-four chapters. [1] The first part "is disaster: Jerusalem is besieged, it falls, and the State falls with it. Part II is the painful recovery". The first part is subdivided into the prophet's call, prophecies of the destruction of Israel, of Jerusalem, and of Judah, and the prophecy of the downfall of the whole state. The second part incorporates prophecies on the fall of heathen nations, prophecies of the redemption of Israel and Judah, and the vision of the restored city of Jerusalem. Bloom continues by comparing this structure to that of Jerusalem, suggesting general correspondences between Ezekiel's acceptance of his prophetic role, and Blake's similar acceptance in Chapter One of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's prophecy of the state's destruction corresponds to Blake's creation of an image of salvation out of Albion's natural history in Chapter Two. The attack on Deism, in Chapter Three, resembles Ezekiel's denunciation of foreign nations,

[1] Erdman, pp. 843--44.

while Chapter Four reveals the result of a confrontation of truth and error in similar terms to Ezekiel's vision of the renewed city. Although Bloom does not expand upon these general suggestions, they provide a helpful introduction to the poem's structure.

Taking Bloom's suggestions as a starting point, I want to examine more closely the relationship between Jerusalem and the Book of Ezekiel, in terms of poetic structure. Both books show evidence of methodical organization. Gerhard von Rad finds in Ezekiel "very careful arrangement", for "Ezekiel, even more than Jeremiah, needed to express his prophetic message in writing in an ordered form." [1] To discover the arrangement of Jerusalem will involve the study of three aspects of each chapter: to whom the chapter is addressed and why; the dialectical movement, or progression through contraries that takes place; and the corresponding division in the Book of Ezekiel.

Blake addresses his first prose preface, a general introduction, to the public, inevitably composed of both sheep and goats. The first chapter of his poem is a general outline of the basic forces at work in contemporary society for creation or destruction, integration or disintegration. In this it corresponds very closely to the opening of Ezekiel, where the prophet sets forth his vision of God

[1] Old Testament Theology, 2 vols., trans. D.M.G. Stalker, Edinburgh and London, 1962, p. 222.

in action, and his awareness of his own prophetic responsibility as a watchman. Robert Gray, in A Key to the Old Testament and Apocrypha,[1] had suggested a four-fold division of the Book of Ezekiel, with Chapters 1 - 3 the first section, "in which the appointment of the Prophet is described." [2] In establishing his own prophetic calling in the first chapter, Blake adopts a similar opening to that of Ezekiel, probably aware of what Gray refers to when he writes that "The name of Ezekiel was happily expressive of that inspired confidence and fortitude which he displayed." [3]

Bloom points out in his commentary to Erdman's edition that Jerusalem progresses by "a dialectical struggle of contraries. In Chapter 1 these are Albion and Los, with Albion incarnating the acceptance of chaos and destruction, and Los opposing such acceptance in the name of prophecy and creation. The conflict of forces here is akin to that in the opening quarter of Ezekiel, with Los - Blake in the role of Ezekiel and the English people or Albion in the role of the Jews or Israel." [4] The first chapter of Jerusalem is certainly parallelistic, as Bloom suggests, moving by way of the contraries of fall

[1] Second edition, 1791.

[2] ibid., p. 396.

[3] ibid., p. 391.

[4] Erdman, pp. 843--44.

and redemption, destruction and creation. Just as the opening chapters of Ezekiel are methodically arranged in terms of the prophet's acceptance of his call over against the people's rejection of their human responsibility, so Chapter One of Jerusalem sets both the Saviour and the poet, Los, over against the stubborn self-annihilation of Albion, and progresses towards the call for the Saviour to "take away the imputation of Sin/By the Creation of States," [1] by way of the contraries of Los and his own spectrous power, Vala and Jerusalem, the sons and daughters of Los and the children of Albion, the building of Golgonooza and of Ulro, with their attendant promptings of hope and despair, and the poet's determined articulation of his vision and the incoherence of Albion's "jealous fears."

Albion is a parody of a Job-figure, for his sufferings are self-inflicted:

> His snows fall on me and cover me, while in the Veil I fold
> My dying limbs, Therefore O Manhood, if thou art aught
> But a meer Phantasy, hear dying Albion's Curse! [2]

In setting Albion's stubborn rejection over against the work of Los, the situation is similar to that which faces Ezekiel:

> But the house of Israel will not hearken unto me, ... for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.[3]

[1] Jerusalem 25. 12--13.

[2] ibid., 23. 35--37.

[3] Ezekiel 3. 7.

Many of the manifestations of Albion's self-annihilation are comparable to the forms of Israel's rebelliousness and their gradual incorporation, as exiles and captives, into their environment:

> Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart. [1]

Blake makes use of Ezekiel's image of the wheel to express the disunity of the Zoas in fallen man, revealing itself in a situation of corruption and exploitation similar to that which Ezekiel found:

> The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. [2]

Blake's second prose preface is addressed to the Jews, because the second chapter of Jerusalem presents a reworking and reorganization of Hebrew history and mythology right from the beginning in the Garden of Eden, until the Daughters of Beulah can call upon the Lamb of God with confidence, to "take away the remembrance of Sin." [3] This corresponds precisely to the second part of Ezekiel's book, which is an allegorised history of Israel, in which the parallel structure between Israel's unrighteous history and her restored future is maintained by Ezekiel's refusal to allow

[1] ibid., 14. 3.

[2] ibid., 22. 29.

[3] Jerusalem 50. 30.

for any redeeming feature in the nation's past, for "in the day when I chose Israel . . . they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me." [1]

The basic organization of the middle section of Ezekiel's book, with the prophet's oracles directed against the spiritual deadness of the people of Israel, and the enmity of foreign nations, is closely related to Blake's addressing of his two middle chapters to the Jews and the Deists. The Jews of the second chapter are clearly those who have the spiritual responsiveness to recover their former innocence, despite the opposition of the Deists of Chapter Three. Gray's analysis of Ezekiel, brief as it is, recognizes that on the one hand, "the Prophet turns his attention to those nations who had unfeelingly triumphed over the Jews in their affliction", while on the other, he "inveighs against the hypocrisy and murmuring spirit of his captive countrymen; encouraging them to resignation by promises of deliverance and by intimations of spiritual redemption." [2]

The dialectic in the second chapter is expressed in terms of the contraries of law and vision; morality and forgiveness, and the spectrous and the human form. Los's aim is identical to Ezekiel's: to provide a bridge for the

[1] Ezekiel 20. 5--8.

[2] Gray, op.cit., pp. 396--97.

redemption of his people from the inevitable consequences of their actions, and "in all the terrors of friendship", to rescue them from the dominion of the law. Ezekiel expresses the purpose of his reorganization of history:

That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.[1]

Blake's chapter, "To the Jews", also appears to bear a number of similarities to the Biblical epistle, "To the Hebrews". Hebrews is addressed to Jewish Christians, and is an attempt, as is shown by its nautical metaphors, and central concern with the rediscovery of communion, to awaken them from the dangers of spiritual drifting to new commitment. The writer presents a new interpretation of the Biblical themes of the church, of Christ, and of sacrifice, in terms of the Christian gospel, attempting to move beyond the picture into the reality. There are similar concerns in Blake's second chapter, where Albion needs a renewed vision, like the Hebrews, to awaken him from complacency, and where this is attempted by presenting a reworking of the major themes of Old Testament history in terms of the new revelations of the gospel.

The third chapter is addressed to the Deists because it reveals the ultimate depth to which man has fallen in contemporary society, but in this very revelation, contains

[1] Ezekiel 14. 5.

the promise of renewal. Again this chapter directly corresponds to the third part of the Book of Ezekiel, where we find Ezekiel's oracles of judgment both on Israel and on foreign nations, combined with the assurance that this will be only a temporary state of affairs, for complete restoration lies ahead, as the vision of resurrection in the valley of bones demonstrates. Los's vision is similarly clarified, when the Spectre, who broods over Albion as a parody of the Holy Spirit, "like a hoar frost & a Mildew",[1] is unambiguously revealed:

> The Spectre is the Reasoning Power in Man; & when
> separated
> From Imagination, and closing itself as in steel,
> in a ratio
> Of the Things of Memory. It thence frames Laws
> & Moralities
> To destroy Imagination! the Divine Body, by
> Martyrdoms & Wars.[2]

The dialectic in this chapter, then, is expressed in terms of the contraries of promise and deistic resistance, the human religion of Jesus and natural theology and religion, the openness of Whitfield and Wesley and the self-righteousness of Voltaire and Rousseau, and "the Glory of Christianity . . . To Conquer by Forgiveness", and the warmongering of Alexanders and Caesars.

Chapter Three ends at a point very close to the nadir of the poem's development, with many of the symbols of

[1] Jerusalem 54. 15.

[2] ibid., 74. 10--14.

Anti-Christ brought together in the monstrous female form of Rahab. Similarly, Ezekiel brings his reader to an awareness of the depths to which his people have sunk, before revealing what is in store for them in terms of their restoration. In Jerusalem, with the Selfhood clearly revealed, a direct confrontation can take place between truth and error, leading to the vision of "All Human Forms identified",[1] corresponding to the final vision of Ezekiel's book, of the renewed temple and community. Swinburne recognized this when he wrote of how Blake's mind seized upon the "interminable inexplicable structures and plans" of the latter chapters of Ezekiel. Blake addresses his chapter to the Christians because it leads us in "at Heaven's gate" to the apocalypse and the religion of Jesus, progressing through the contraries of the Anti-Christ and Jesus, past and future, selfhood and community, and Caiaphas, "the dark Preacher of Death", and Jesus, "the bright Preacher of Life".[2]

The contrast between the third and fourth parts of Ezekiel, between the isolation and exile of both people and prophet, and the newly unified community, is repeated in Chapters Three and Four of Jerusalem. Ezekiel guarantees the reintegration of national life:

[1] ibid., 99. 1.

[2] ibid., 77.

But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. [1]

In Jerusalem, the alienated Albion[2] and his exiled children[3] are reunited in the coming together with which the poem ends. The furnaces of affliction, into which Albion casts himself become "fountains of living waters",[4] part of the total transformation involved in the renewal of nature in human form. The waters which flow from the sanctuary in Ezekiel's vision of the temple also bring life and health wherever they pass:

There shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come hither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh. [5]

In Jerusalem, the black water of the "dark Atlantic vale"[6] associated with the flood of time and space, sweeping away all but the eternal arts, and the "waters of death",[7] become "living waters flowing from the Humanity Divine",[8] linked once more with the rivers of Eden, bringing fertility and blessing wherever they flow. The furnaces which

[1] Ezekiel 36. 8.

[2] Jerusalem 4. 22.

[3] ibid., 19. 1.

[4] ibid., 96. 36--37.

[5] Ezekiel 47. 9.

[6] Jerusalem 4. 9--10.

[7] ibid., 60. 26.

[8] ibid., 96. 37.

become fountains used to stand on Udan-Adan, a deadly indefinite lake within the Mundane Shell, where:

> They put forth their spectrous cloudy sails, which drive their immense
> Constellations over the deadly deeps of indefinite Udan-Adan. [1]

However, the indefinite must take clear fourfold shape, until:

> The Four Living Creatures Chariots of Humanity Divine Incomprehensible
> In beautiful Paradise expand These are the Four Rivers of Paradise. [2]

In Ezekiel, the waters of chaos which would engulf Tyre, "when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee", become, in the renewed city, healing waters, life-giving rather than destroying.

The fusion of social and cultural aspirations in a common religious, national life which Ezekiel sought for Israel, is achieved in Jerusalem when Albion throws himself into the furnaces of affliction, and casting off the Selfhood, is created anew:

> And they conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic which bright
> Redounded from their Tongues in thunderous majesty, in Visions
> In new expanses, creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect

[1] ibid., 7. 21--22.

[2] ibid., 98. 24--25.

Creating Space, Creating Time according to the wonders
Divine
Of Human Imagination. [1]

The realization of potential by such dialectical struggle of positive contraries is basic to the structure both of the Book of Ezekiel and of Jerusalem.

W.H. Stevenson's claim in his essay, "Blake's Jerusalem",[2] that in Jerusalem "we have a number of incidents, but no real purpose: the round is endless, and a 'deus ex machina' is required to stop it," [3] highlights the need for an understanding of the motivating force behind Blake's view of historical progression. Taking up Stevenson's claim of a 'deus ex machina', we might formulate the question in terms of what motivates Albion to cast himself into the "Furnaces of affliction" and lose his selfhood, when earlier we had seen that "Albion cold lays on his Rock: storms & snows beat round him."[4]

Harold Fisch, in his essay "Blake's Miltonic Moment",[5] rightly points to the dialectical apparatus for understanding history which Blake adapted from his reading of Paracelsus and Böhme, but the parallelistic organization

[1] ibid., 98. 28--32.

[2] Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), 254--64.

[3] ibid., p. 259.

[4] Jerusalem 94. 1.

[5] William Blake; Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. A.H. Rosenfeld, Brown Univ. Press, 1969, pp. 36--56.

of Jerusalem, arranged by way of contraries, has a much more basic source, as we have seen, in the similar use of contrasted images in Ezekiel and the Johannine writings, where antitheses such as life and death, light and darkness, and freedom and slavery, are concrete and vivid expressions of existential possibilities in their concept of man. Michael Phillips refers to this antiphonal structure in Jerusalem in his essay, "Blake's Early Poetry",[1] where he writes of how Blake's aesthetic moves towards the organic form of Biblical poetry, prophecy and history, in Blake's turning from general statement to the form of Biblical writings for his major works, works which confront the reader with man in existential situations, rather than as an object in nature.

The direction, then, which Blake's revolutionary ardour took in reaction to the wearisome cycle of The Mental Traveller, was towards the challenge of creating an image in his poetry of the movement of time from fall to redemption to such an extent that the question of historical progression became the basic concern of the later books, and was the major force in determining their form. The prominence of Los in the action of Jerusalem, as the director of history, bringing together ideas of time and of poetic activity, is further evidence of these concerns.

[1] William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, ed. M.D. Paley and Michael Phillips, Oxford, 1973, pp. 1--28. See pp. 25--26.

In the Book of Ezekiel, the radical nature of the prophet's vision, though taking its form from the forward march from Paradise, through fall, to the new Jerusalem, rules out any optimism over natural progress towards a new world-order. Instead we find the elements of apocalypse in Ezekiel's rich and vivid description of the intervention of God in history, destroying powers hostile to his kingdom, and establishing that kingdom in love, centred around Jerusalem. This will involve the destruction of Israel's illusory protective wall, just as in Jerusalem the very real force of the human form of Albion's mountains will be destroyed, his possessiveness making them barren and opaque:[1]

> There shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hail stones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it.[2]

Böhme develops this imagery in his Epistle, No. 41, where he warns that:

> The tribulation and collapse of Babel fast approaches; the thunderstorm arises in all places; it will rage violently; vain hope deceives, for the tree's destruction is near . . . Babel's tower has become without foundation; one hopes to keep it up with props, but a wind from the Lord will collapse it.

In Jerusalem, only the completeness of fourfold vision, vision that is fully adequate, can bring about such an apocalypse, for the restoration of the community of man in the new kingdom is a restoration of awareness of what finally constitutes reality, for "the Last Judgment is not Fable or Allegory but Vision."[3] Blake sees approach-

[1] Jerusalem 4. 29 and 45. 2--28.

[2] Ezekiel 13. 11.

[3] A Vision of the Last Judgment, p. 68.

ing the day of the Lord, "to whom the Ancients look'd and saw his day afar off, with trembling and amazement";[1] a day which will reveal the centrality of the human form, for not only will each particle be seen as "a Man, human-formed," but the expansion of vision will reach the point where:

> . . . . . the Jewels of Light,
> Heavenly Men beaming bright,
> Appear'd as One Man. [2]

The integration achieved in the final plates of Jerusalem is similar to that which the symbol of Byzantium signified for Yeats; a society fleeing merely worldly splendour, its eyes fixed firmly on the hope of the new Jerusalem, with its vigorous fusion of all human pursuits, and the permanence of its purged images. Such an integration is brought about through Albion's willingness to cast himself into the "Furnaces of affliction", for:

> . . .. . Self was lost in the contemplation of faith
> And in wonder at the Divine Mercy & at Los's sublime honour. [3]

Blake's preparation for Albion's resurrection is thorough. I will suggest later in the thesis that the Song of Los on Plates 85 and 86 is the turning-point of the poem, and begins its second movement, for in it Los, as the artist working in time, achieves a poetic form characterized by

1 Jerusalem. 3.

2 Letter to Thomas Butts, 2 October 1800.

3 Jerusalem 96. 31--32.

the serenity and confidence of tone of the Saviour, which is effective to bridge the gulf between himself and Albion, and which leads directly to his growing unity with Jesus in action. Earlier, Jerusalem's lament on Plate 79 had revealed her complete helplessness in terms of effective action to release herself from her captivity. Once he has achieved the tone and poetic form of the Saviour, Los's words take on a similar life-giving power to Ezekiel's in the Valley of Bones, and have their effect on both Albion and Jerusalem, until Albion, like Los, is able to be united fully with Jesus.

It is an integration achieved, too, because of the suicidal effect of the consolidation of Albion's enemies, reaching its fulness in the appearance of the Covering Cherub on Plate 89. Blake again turns to Ezekiel and St. John for his imagery, the figure being inspired by Ezekiel's description of the Prince of Tyre. Living and thriving on death, he is the ultimate consolidation of the forces of Antichrist, and thus the ultimate incarnation of all that is self-defeating.

The motivating power behind Albion's revival is the progression not so much in self-knowledge, the theme of Milton, as in the realization of this self-knowledge in action. This takes place in Los, as we have already seen in his achievement of a poetic form worthy of the Saviour, and also in the reader whom Blake has called upon to participate in his epic. All human growth is thus a movement towards Albion's liberation. Conceiving of his poem as a record of the growth of the poetic mind in the figure

of Los, and of the prophetic mind of "every honest man",[1] Jerusalem adapts the imagery of eschatology to signify the establishment of a community of the imagination in "Friendship and Brotherhood", without which "Man is Not".[2] This integration is realized in Jerusalem in the complete oneness of Los and Jesus, as is clear even to Albion:

> Albion replyd. Cannot Man exist without Mysterious Offering of Self for Another, is this Friendship and Brotherhood
> I see thee in the likeness & similitude of Los my Friend.[3]

Albion's recognition of the oneness of Los and Jesus leads to his own achievement of unity with them. The integration with which Jerusalem ends is identical to the intention of the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, as Ernst Cassirer describes it in his book, An Essay on Man, where he writes of the Biblical prophets that:

> Their ideal future signifies the negation of the empirical world, the 'end of all days'; but it contains at the same time the hope and the assurance of "a new heaven and a new earth.' Here too man's symbolic power ventures beyond all the limits of his finite existence. But his negation implies a new and great act of integration; it marks a decisive phase in man's ethical and religious life.[4]

The final plate of Jerusalem bears witness to the

[1] Annotations to R. Watson's An Apology for the Bible, Letter II, p. 14.

[2] Jerusalem 96. 16.

[3] ibid., 96. 20--22.

[4] Yale Univ. Press, 1944; New York, 1970, p. 60.

fact that the central images of the poem are images of work and of action. Man's salvation is achieved through creative work, as the central figure of the plate testifies, with his instruments of labour, his hammer and tongs, to break down all that becomes inhumanly hard and opaque, and to forge forms of brotherhood. His fellow labourers are both male and female, working in spite of the coiling embraces of the serpent temple, the male carrying the sun of time, the female "Weaving the Web of life",[1] the three figures uniting in a trinity of human creativity.

[1] Jerusalem 83. 73.

4. Stylistic Features.

Richard Hurd, in his Letters on Chivalry and Romance,[1] aptly writes of Paradise Lost that "the pagan Gods, and Gothic Faeries were equally out of credit when Milton wrote. He did well therefore to supply their room with angels and devils." One might say the same about Jerusalem, that Blake did well to adapt so much of his imagery from the Book of Ezekiel; imagery which was still a central part of a living tradition.

It is not surprising that Blake should find Ezekiel a congenial source for a number of his most important images. Each has, above all, a thoroughly inclusive imagination, which incorporates whatever comes to hand. This is clear from Blake's constant use of very minor contemporary figures as characters in his poem, and from the cumulative way in which his myth is built from a large number of sources. Michaelis, in his notes to Gregory's 1787 edition of Lowth's Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, had pointed to Ezekiel's continual use of borrowed images, which he adapted to his own purposes, amplifying them "with singular ingenuity."[2] Referring to Ezekiel 39. 17--20 by way of example, Michaelis writes that "In this I seem to read a poet, who is unwilling to omit anything

[1] 1762.

[2] Lowth, op.cit., Vol.II, p. 90, n.6.

of the figurative kind which presents itself to his mind, and would think his poem deficient, if he did not adorn it with every probable fiction which could be added." He goes on to write of the fertility and copiousness, as well as the accuracy, of Ezekiel's imagination. Again, Michaelis both amplifies and qualifies Lowth's views, the latter having found Ezekiel's imagery "crowded, magnificent, terrific, sometimes almost to disgust." [1] Von Rad's scholarly study in his Old Testament Theology points to similar qualities in Ezekiel's writing. Ezekiel's fusion of dissimilar elements reveals "an unusual intellectual ability to integrate material." [2] He boldly adapts traditional mythological and legendary material to his own purposes, Von Rad suggests, in his use of the images of the "primeval man" in 28. 11 ff., the "foundling" in 16. 1 ff., and the "marvellous tree" in 31. 1 ff. The similarity between this and Blake's use and adoption to his own purposes of images from the Bible, from English poetic traditions, from various esoteric traditions, and from many aspects of contemporary city life, its furnaces, mills, wheels, cogs, and looms, its workmen and watchmen, its industry and manufacturing processes,[3] suggests that

[1] ibid., pp. 91--92.

[2] Von Rad, op.cit., p. 222.

[3] For discussion of Blake as poet of the city, see E.B. Sanzo's William Blake: Poet of the City in the Industrial Age, New York Univ. Ph.D. Thesis, 1971.

Blake may have found himself temperamentally in sympathy with the Biblical prophet's imaginative methods.

In discussing some of the images which Blake adapted from Ezekiel, I have dealt only with the more significant and extended images, pointing out other allusions to the Book of Ezekiel in my reading of Jerusalem in Chapter Six of this thesis.

We have seen in the last section how Blake made use of Ezekiel's water imagery, expressing through it a whole cyclical view of the movement of civilisation, as the rivers, "waters of death",[1] become "living waters flowing from the Humanity Divine",[2] through the transformation of the furnaces of affliction, situated on the "deadly deeps of indefinite Udan-Adan",[3] into life-giving "fountains of Living Waters".[4]

As E.J. Rose has pointed out, Blake's use of Ezekiel's image of the wheel likewise gives expression to a whole visionary theory.[5] The Urizenic wheels "with cogs tyrannic moving by compulsion each other",[6] are associated with war,

[1] Jerusalem 60. 26.

[2] ibid., 96. 37.

[3] ibid., 7. 22.

[4] ibid., 96. 36--37.

[5] "Wheels Within Wheels", Studies in Romanticism, 11, No. 1 (Winter, 1972), 36--47.

[6] Jerusalem 15. 18--19.

punishment, Druidic worship, mystery, the mills of Babylon, abstraction, mechanistic philosophy and natural religion.[1] The disunity of the Zoas in fallen man is represented in terms of wheels unsynchronized, forced to revolve in an unending series of natural cycles, revealing itself in a situation of corruption and exploitation similar to that which Ezekiel found:

> The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully [2]

and for which he strongly indicts the kings and political rulers.[3] Böhme's association of "the outward life . . . fallen quite under the power of the Stars" with the "fall into Wrath, Murder, Whoredom, Theft, Poisoning and Death,"[4] may be behind the starry wheels which signify an unending series of natural cycles in Jerusalem, in which the beginning and end of creation have been forgotten, leaving the world to appear as a chaotic void. Into this void the university and capital cities are drawn,[5] and:

[1] ibid., 22. 34; 60. 7; 62. 32--33; 5. 46--53; 60. 39--44; 13. 37; 15. 16; 77. 17--20.

[2] Ezekiel 22. 29.

[3] ibid., 19. 1--14; 8. 16 etc.

[4] "The Threefold Life of Man", The Works of Jacob Behmen, 1764--81, Vol.2, p. 116.

[5] Jerusalem 5. 3--4.

> . . . Jerusalem and Vala, weeping in the Cloud
> Wander away into the Chaotic Void, lamenting with her Shadow
> Among the Daughters of Albion, among the Starry Wheels;
> Lamenting for children, for the sons and daughters of Albion [1]

for Albion's sons themselves are turned into a starry Zodiac.[2] In a mythological parody of Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God departing eastward and resting on the mountain,[3] the same starry wheels which drive Los's Spectre,[4] and are associated with the mechanical revolutions of the law, draw Jerusalem eastward until she rests on the mountain as a pillar of cloud, a parody of God's glory, "howling in pain, redounding from the arms of Beulah's Daughters."[5]

Ezekiel shows himself aware of the numerous forms that evil may take in personal and social relationships. His portrayal of the Prince of Tyre reveals him as an archetypal figure, once "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty",[6] when placed on "the holy mountain of God . . . in the midst of the stones of fire",[7] but cast out because of his pride:

[1] ibid., 5. 62--65.

[2] ibid., 5. 25--33.

[3] Ezekiel 11. 23.

[4] Jerusalem 6. 1--2.

[5] ibid., 5. 48--49.

[6] Ezekiel 28. 12.

[7] ibid., 28. 14.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. [1]

He is identified with the cherubim set to guard the tree of life in Eden, and with the cherubim who stretch out their wings to cover the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, for:

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.[2]

In adapting his Covering Cherub from Ezekiel's Prince of Tyre, and adding elements of the great dragon of Ezekiel and Revelation, representing the bondage of Egypt and natural religion, "minute Particulars in slavery",[3] and the Antichrist of the New Testament, Blake is able to show that the Antichrist is that part in every individual which must be destroyed, for:

> Establishment of Truth depends on destruction of Falsehood continually.
> On Circumcision: not on Virginity, O Reasoners of Albion. [4]

Taking over the role of the cherubim guarding the Tree of Life, the Covering Cherub has become a Druid Spectre[5] preventing our access to Eden and the Tree of Life, "the

[1] ibid., 28. 17.

[2] ibid., 28. 15.

[3] Jerusalem 89. 17.

[4] ibid., 55. 65--66.

[5] ibid., 98. 6.

natural barrier between visionary desire and apocalyptic completion,"[1] a demonic parody of the resurrection,[2] and a perverted reflection of the garden of paradise:

> His Head dark, deadly, in its Brain incloses a reflexion
> Of Eden all perverted; Egypt on the Gihon many tongued
> And many mouthed; Ethiopia, Libya, the Sea of Rephaim
> Minute particulars in slavery I beheld among the brick-kilns
> Disorganiz'd, & there is Pharoah in his iron Court.[3]

Like the cherubim in the tabernacle hiding the mercy-seat, he is associated with the cloud that overshadowed Jesus at his transfiguration, maintaining the delusion of a remote and tyrannical God of mystery "afar off".[4]

In Jerusalem, as in Milton, the greatest horror of the Covering Cherub lies in his "seeming a brother, being a tyrant."[5] The guises he takes are numerous, some male, some female. One of his guises is as woman, "caught by pride",[6] like the Prince of Tyre, and her false morality

[1] H. Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, New York, 1963, p.430.

[2] Jerusalem 89. 13.

[3] ibid., 89. 14--18.

[4] ibid., 4. 18; 96. 17--18.

[5] Milton 7. 22.

[6] Jerusalem 81. 6.

leads to the cruelties of war and sacrifice,[1] through the cruel harlotry of Rahab, intensely beautiful and mysterious, or the usurpation of Tirzah,[2] leaving man barren and helpless.

The Cherub can also take the form of the sterility of the hermaphrodite, where the contraries of male and female are clouded into negations, for "the definite alone resides in Definite and Determinate Identity",[3] or the form of the iron-clad lions of authority depicted on Plate 41 of Jerusalem, which terrorize Mary and Joseph, and urge Joseph to the moral virtue that would put Mary away from him.[4] Blake associates public execution with such virtue:

> . . . the fires blazed on Druid Altars
> And the Sun set in Tyburns Brook where victims howl & cry. [5]

The unambiguous revelation of the Covering Cherub is necessary for its destruction:

[1] Blake interprets Ezekiel's condemnation of child sacrifice in Ezekiel 16. 21; 20. 26 etc., in terms of the misuse and oppression of children in his own day:

> Moab & Ammon & Amalek & Canaan & Egypt & Aram
> Receive her little-ones for sacrifice and the delights of cruelty.

Jerusalem 5. 14--15.

[2] As one of the daughters of Zelophedad in Numbers 26. 33, who received the inheritance of their father, Tirzah represents the sort of lust that turns Hyle and Coban into Sinai and Horeb.

[3] Jerusalem 55. 64.

[4] ibid., 61. 4--5.

[5] ibid., 62. 33--34.

> Thus was the Covering Cherub revealed majestic image
> Of Selfhood, Body put off, the Antichrist accursed
> Covered with precious stones, a Human Dragon terrible
> And bright, stretched over Europe & Asia gorgeous [1]

and is a direct parallel of Los's recognition of his own Spectre. Bloom suggests that the Spectre of Urthona is "very appealing in Jerusalem, and Blake's critics, (myself included), have erred in slighting this appeal, and thus diminishing the force of Blake's extraordinary artistry."[2] However, the poem leaves us in no doubt as to the Spectre's true nature. We are well prepared for the Spectre's appearance. It is emphasized that he is a "Black Horror", a "blackening Shadow, blackening dark & opake",[3] who curses Los and attempts to lure him by any means, hungering and thirsting for his life. We will not be taken in by his attempts to become an object of Los's pity, for we have been warned that:

> . . . . . he sought by other means
> To lure Los: by tears, by arguments of science, &
> by terrors.[4]

He appears to be concerned for Los, and appeals against Los's refusal to despair, and to his sense of indignation,

[1] ibid., 89. 9--12.

[2] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy," Eighteenth Century Studies, 4 (1970--71), 6--20.

[3] Jerusalem 4. 65 - 5. 5.

[4] ibid., 7. 5--6.

that he should no longer forgive.[1] Later however it is said of Hand that not only was he scornful and furious in pride, but continually bringing against Los "indignant self-righteousnesses like whirlwinds of the north",[2] and that as Hand was, the Spectre now is. It is by such steps that Los gradually becomes aware of the Spectre's deceits, until he can be clearly and unambiguously revealed:

> Thou art my Pride & Self-righteousness: I have found thee out
> Thou art reveald before me in all thy magnitude & power.[3]

Los resists the Spectre's temptations to despair with great conviction, for he knows that if the Sons of Albion look upon the beauty of eternity as deformity, and loveliness as a dry tree,[4] it is because "as a man is, so he sees."[5] In revealing the creation in its human form, and eventually as one man, Los is healing the division into which it has fallen, for as the universe expands from its infinite centre, it becomes more and more diffuse, until great abstract voids open up between each star.[6] These voids are the starry wheels, the abstractions, into which the capital and university cities have been driven.[7] Bloom

[1] ibid., 7. 25--27.
[2] ibid., 7. 71 - 8. 6.
[3] ibid., 8. 30--31.
[4] ibid., 9. 7--8.
[5] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.
[6] Jerusalem 13. 34--37.
[7] ibid., 5. 3--4.

is right however in pointing to the Spectre's appeal, for like Milton's Satan, his rhetoric has a demonic nobility, but ultimately he is a parody of heroic action, again like Satan in Paradise Lost, beginning and ending in cyclical nihilism:

> In Selfhood, we are nothing: but fade away in mornings breath. [1]

The function of the cities in Jerusalem is to become the cherubim who bore the chariot in Ezekiel's vision of the enthroned man, although their premature attempt to force Albion to take his place on the chariot is self-defeating:

> With one accord in love sublime, & as on Cherubs wings
> They Albion surround with kindest violence to bear him back
> Against his will thro Los's Gate to Eden. [2]

Blake's identification of Albion here with the divinity of Ezekiel's vision is explicitly stated later by Los:

> Thou wast the Image of God surrounded by the Four Zoas. [3]

As the poem progresses towards its final goal, each man is seen to be more and more complete in himself, until

[1] ibid., 40. 12-13.

[2] ibid., 39. 1--3.

[3] ibid., 42. 23.

finally, instead of each Zoa being a city, each man contains all four Zoas, and is seen as the bearer of the divine image in himself:

> And every Man stood Fourfold. each Four Faces had.
> One to the West
> One toward the East One to the South One to the North.
> the Horses Fourfold
> And the dim Chaos brightend beneath, above, around!
> Eyed as the Peacock. [1]

This is brought about, as I have already suggested, by the recovery of the life-giving power of the prophet who surveys the Valley of bones, and bestows resurrected life to them by the power of his words.

Blake's claims for the measure of his poem in the first prose preface to Jerusalem have seldom been taken seriously by those who have found the poem to be lacking in coherence and proportion. Modelled on Milton's defence of the verse of Paradise Lost, Blake's claim is a similar assertion "of ancient liberty recovered," in his case from the bondage of predictability, just as Milton desired to be free from the restrictions of rhyme which so hampered Cowley in his Davideis, and just as Spenser affirmed the primacy of the artist above the rules of the grammarians. In defence of the measure of Jerusalem, Blake writes:

> I therefore have produced a variety in every line, both of cadences & number of syllables. Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place: the terrific numbers are reserved for the terrific parts - the mild & gentle, for

[1] ibid., 98. 12--14.

the mild & gentle parts, and the prosaic, for inferior parts: all are necessary to each other.[1]

While much has been done to dispel the mists of which Swinburne complained in finding Jerusalem to be a "noisy and misty land",[2] the poem remains to many a remarkably noisy place, dominated, according to Alicia Ostriker in her study of Blake's verse, by "the horrid clang of the Blake - Los hammer."[3] Yeats's characterization of the Blake of Jerusalem as "a too literal realist of imagination",[4] hating every grace of style, has tended to persist in different guises, notably in claims that Jerusalem is harsh and ugly, but necessarily so, if it is to incarnate the reality of an ugly fallen world. Frye defends the poem on the grounds that it is governed by "a grim resolve to portray experience as it is regardless of its horror." Thus, "the fundamental difference in approach between Jerusalem and The Four Zoas, which latter has much more of the rococo spirit, and much loveliness," is that "Jerusalem is harsh . . . continually muttering or howling sinister spells to compel the devil to appear in his true shape "[5]; a view which has continued largely unchallenged.

[1] Jerusalem 3.

[2] Swinburne, op.cit., p. 231.

[3] Ostriker, op. cit., p. 190.

[4] "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy", The Savoy, Nos. 3--5, 1896.

[5] Fearful Symmetry, pp. 358--59.

It is not my intention to claim that Jerusalem is never rugged, but to suggest that it is by no means the most important of the diversity of poetic styles which Blake outlines in his defence. In reading Jerusalem we are aware, on the one hand, of the vigour of the language of the prophet, seeking to call a remnant from their group situation, to belong to the true people of God, few in numbers, and isolated from the rest of society; and on the other hand, of the calmness and objectivity with which the poet seeks to delineate his vision. It is the vigour and colour of the style which Bloom has in mind when he characterizes it as "a series of firebursts, one wave of flame after another. Blake's Jerusalem has the form of such a series, appropriate to a poem whose structure takes Ezekiel's book as its model."[1] Blake's refusal to be tied down by narrative progression facilitates such flashes of fiery insight, just as in Ezekiel promises of restoration shine out amidst the oracles of judgment:

> Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.[2]

However, at the same time, the poet in Jerusalem is one who "walks forward thro' Eternity," wearing the bright sandal "form'd immortal of precious stones and gold",[3] for the

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy."

[2] Ezekiel 16. 60.

[3] Milton 21. 12--14.

struggle of Milton is past, and Los's conflict with the Spectre is the record of a state already passed through:

> For now! O Glory! and O Delight! I have entirely reduced that spectrous Fiend to his station, whose annoyance has been the ruin of my labours for the last twenty years of my life . . . he is become my servant who domineered over me, he is even as a brother who was my enemy.[1]

Jerusalem begins with the Saviour's "mild song", a song which is calm and controlled, gently attempting to awaken Albion to reality: a song of love and friendship, wholly without anger, which establishes the tone and serves as a model for the poet whose task it is to rescue Albion. It is the very expression of the Saviour whose love, like morning sunlight, greets the newly awakened sleeper, and as such it would appear to be a reversal of the early part of St. Mark's Gospel, which records growing opposition to Jesus, until his brothers and mother attempt to take him away forcibly.

The contrast between the controlled song of the Saviour, and the panic-stricken and self-justifying protest of Albion which immediately follows it, could scarcely be more complete, nor more significantly placed than at the very beginning of the poem. Faced with this situation, the poet recognizes that it is only the spirit of the Saviour's "mild song" which can enable him to accomplish his task:

> To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
> Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity
> Ever expanding in the Bosom of God: the Human Imagination
> O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness and love.[2]

This is because he knows that Albion's separated parts:

[1] Letter to William Hayley, 23 October 1804.

[2] Jerusalem 5. 18-21.

> . . . have divided themselves by Wrath. they must be united by
> Pity: let us therefore take example & warning O my Spectre,
> O that I could abstain from wrath! O that the Lamb
> Of God would look upon me and pity me in my fury. [1]

It is one of Los's problems throughout the poem, to be able to restrain anger, and join the Divine Family "following merciful", as in 33. 10--11, by continually relearning compassion and pity.

It is important, however, to distinguish true pity and mildness from its uncreative and selfish form, just as it is necessary to distinguish true and false wrath. It is possible to curse mildly, as Satan does in Milton,[2] just as it is possible for pity to take the form of self-pity, as it does with Albion:

> He felt that Love & Pity are the same; a soft repose!
> Inward complacency of soul: a self annihilation.[3]

The typical form of female pity in Jerusalem is that possessiveness which strangles and deadens. This false form of pity is closely allied with unproductive and uncreative remorse, such as Albion's, on seeing Jerusalem:

> My soul is melted away, inwoven within the Veil,[4]

[1] ibid., 7. 57--60.

[2] Milton 7. 35.

[3] Jerusalem 23. 14--15.

[4] ibid., 23. 4.

in contrast to Brittannia's selfless remorse on Plate 94. Albion's is uncreative because he does not see beyond himself, and thus can never turn it into action. It sinks into brooding introspection, which, as Jerusalem perceives, leads only to despair:

> The Infant Joy is beautiful, but its anatomy
> Horrible ghast & deadly! nought shalt thou find in it,
> But dark despair & everlasting brooding melancholy! [1]

Ezekiel similarly refuses to acknowledge remorse which is unaccompanied by action, and which remains as ridiculous as Albion's protestations of worthlessness "before the watry Shadows."[2]

True pity, on the contrary, recognizes the reality of sacrifice, as do the cities, though they turn away from it:

> If we are wrathful Albion will destroy Jerusalem with rooty Groves
> If we are merciful, ourselves must suffer destruction on his Oaks! [3]

Los must learn the same truth in his search of the interiors of Albion, knowing that "he who takes vengeance alone is the criminal",[4] leaving him only with the force of pity for:

[1] ibid., 22. 22--24.

[2] ibid., 43. 41.

[3] ibid., 38. 8--9.

[4] ibid., 45. 32.

. . . . . O whom
Should I pity if I pity not the sinner who is gone astray! [1]

This is the theme of Blake's retelling of the story of Mary and Joseph on Plate 61, just as it becomes clear that it is the theme of Ezekiel's retelling of Israel's history:

Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.[2]

Los must learn to keep his wrath only for himself in the form of his Spectre, just as Albion, when he eventually rises, rises "In anger",[3] using his anger upon himself to reorganize his Zoas. It is a constant theme of Jerusalem that the only way to deal with others is in pity, while wrath is reserved for dealing with oneself. It is whenever a poetic form characterized by the same mildness as the Saviour's "mild song" is achieved, that we have a progression in the narrative of the poem. This happens with the "mild song" of the Regions of Beulah on Plate 25, whose call to the Lamb of God to deliver individuals by the creation of states is answered and begun to be accomplished on Plate 31, and it happens again with the call to the Lamb to "take away the remembrance of Sin" on Plate 50, in the "mild song" of the Daughters of Beulah;

[1] ibid., 45. 34--35.

[2] Ezekiel 20. 36.

[3] Jerusalem 95. 5--6.

a call answered, as Kiralis points out,[1] in Joseph's awakening to "the Continual Forgiveness of Sins" on Plate 61.

The contrast between the serenity of the Eternals and Los's attempts to control his anger and inner conflicts, remains central until the turning-point of the poem. Los's spiritual sword is a work of "sighs & tears" as well as "bitter groans," and his city of art, Golgonooza, is built only of those qualities which characterized the Saviour's song; pity, compassion and forgiveness, the "labour of merciful hands." In contrast, Blake writes of Los's Spectre, his "Reasoning Power . . . that Negatives every thing":

> Shuddring the Spectre howls. his howlings terrify the night
> He stamps around the Anvil, beating blows of stern despair,

just as Albion later, in his panic, is described "Hoarse from his rocks", while his twelve sons' "thunders hoarse appall the Dead." "Storms & fire" have replaced "the sweet sound of his harp" in Albion's land. Over against this, Blake sets the mild songs of the fellow-labourers of Los and of the Regions of Beulah.[2]

[1] "The Theme and Structure of William Blake's Jerusalem," English Literary History, 23 (1956), 127--43.

[2] Jerusalem 9. 17--18; 12. 28--41; 10. 13--14; 10. 23--24; 23. 27; 18. 9; 19. 3--4; 11. 17 - 12. 4; 25. 3--13.

The turning-point of Jerusalem occurs when, in the "Song of Los",[1] Los achieves the same mildness, serenity and beauty which characterized the Saviour's "mild-song":

> And thus Los replies upon his Watch: the Valleys listen silent:
> The Stars stand still to hear: Jerusalem & Vala cease to mourn:
> . . . . . .
> O lovely mild Jerusalem! O Shiloh of Mount Ephraim!
> I see thy Gates of precious stones: thy Walls of gold & silver:
> Thou art the soft reflected Image of the Sleeping Man.[2]

The whole creation, which has been groaning under its heavy burden of being subjected to vanity, grows silent in expectancy, awaiting Los's song, a song which begins the second main movement of the poem, with its acceleration towards Albion's awakening and the reintegration of the whole of human activity in the life of imaginative perception. The tone of the song signifies that Los has become one with Jesus in the saving and uniting power of pity, providing pity with the opportunity to "join together those whom wrath has torn in sunder."[3] Essentially, the song is in praise of Jerusalem, drawing from the visions of Isaiah in Isaiah 6 and St. John in Revelation 21 and 22, and from the description of the garments of the priests in Exodus 28. To underline that Los's uniting with Jesus

[1] ibid., 85. 22--86. 32.

[2] ibid., 85. 14--15 and 22--24.

[3] ibid., 7. 62.

has begun, the descent of the dove, which is the song of Los, is followed immediately by a time of great testing, in the form of Los's most painful temptation. Enitharmon, in refusal of Los's dominion, appears "like a faint rainbow",[1] in mockery of the appearance of Jerusalem earlier in the Song of Los, "clear as the rainbow."[2] She separates from him, and instead of offering her love in self-giving, provokes him with her beauty, tempting him to envy. Los overcomes the temptation by sternly opposing the pattern of relationship which is based on self-giving to that of female domination, proposed by Enitharmon, and the way towards the resolution of the poem is open.

The triumph of Los bears fruit in the new confidence and wisdom which he reveals in his speech on Plate 91, which again clearly demonstrates the diversity of Blake's poetic achievement in Jerusalem, for following the beauty of Los's song, here his poetry is stripped down until it has all of the "stark, bare, rocky directness of statement" which Lawrence was to seek a hundred years later. Los's triumph also signifies the end of his struggles with the Spectre:

> Thus Los alterd his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason
> He alterd time after time, with dire pain & many tears
> Till he had completely divided him into a separate space.[3]

[1] ibid., 86. 50.

[2] ibid., 86. 21.

[3] ibid., 91. 50--52.

J. Middleton Murry wrote perceptively of Blake's poetry in Jerusalem when he suggested that "it almost satisfies Wordsworth's condition of poetry - emotion recollected in tranquillity."[1] The speech of the Living Creatures on Plate 55. 36--46 may well serve to show in microcosm, in its gradual movement from loudness to peace and serenity, the movement which takes place in Jerusalem as a whole, following the Saviour's "mild song." The poetic variety which Blake has incorporated within the general movement of his poem is immense. The way in which he has sought to put "Every word and every letter . . . into its fit place" is still a source for inexhaustible elucidation.

In her recent essay, "A Note on Blake's Unfettered Verse",[2] Kathleen Raine writes of Blake's tendency "towards the unbounded, but never, it must be said, to the formless, only to the longer phrases of ever more comprehensive form." The poetry of Jerusalem certainly tends in this direction, and Miss Raine is right to emphasize that Blake never allows it to stray into excess, as he had done in the less mature poetry of The French Revolution. "In his use of the long line," she continues, "he is unequalled among English poets." Blake's attempts to create a variety of metrical forms, centred around the hexameter and heptameter, which grow

1 Murry, op.cit., p. 257.

2 Rosenfeld, op.cit., pp. 382--94.

out of the poetry, result in the metre being governed by the sense, and by the direction of the poem's meaning. When Blake writes:

> (I call them by their English names: English, the rough basement.
> Los built the stubborn structure of the Language, acting against
> Albions melancholy, who must else have been a Dumb despair.)[1]

he has in mind the friction which occurs between the metrical form of poetry, and the earthiness of the language and its natural speech rhythms. This is a friction which sparks poetry into life, for it acts against "Albions melancholy", just as in his first prose preface, Blake desired to free his poetry from the "monotony" of the blank verse epic.

It is fundamental to Blake's poetic intentions in Jerusalem, that the poetry consists in rhythmical units rather than in isolated effects; a process which Kathleen Raine points towards, in referring to the fitting of metre to meaning in poems such as "The Sick Rose" and "Infant Joy." Blake's control of his language is clearest in his adaptation and variety of metrical forms within the continuity of his rhythmical patterns. His control over the music of language is evident in his skilful internal use of repetition and of parallelism, similar to the style of

[1] Jerusalem 36. 58--60.

Biblical parallelism, which Lowth had examined in great detail, especially drawing attention to the Psalmist's use of the device. Blake uses it in both simple and more complex forms, the former as in:

> Those who give their lives for him are despised!
> Those who devour his soul, are taken into his bosom![1]

and the latter as in Los's fine description of the new Jerusalem:

> And thus Los replies upon his watch: the Valleys
> listen silent
> The stars stand still to hear: Jerusalem & Vala
> cease to mourn
> His voice is heard from Albion: the Alps & Appenines
> Listen.[2]

Blake's language in Jerusalem has all of the boldness of the language of the Biblical prophets, whose vigorously anthropomorphic style emphasizes the unity of God and man. The anthropomorphic features vividly intensify the prophets' presentation of the nearness of God's presence and the directness of his dealings with man. At the same time it is wise to take note of H. Wheeler Robinson's warning that the intention of such language was to reveal, in the only way possible, a God who is living, personal and knowable in his activity, and that to abstract such language by sifting it through Greek philosophic thought patterns leaves us

[1] ibid., 36. 15--16.

[2] ibid., 85. 14--17.

with a travesty of that intention.[1] It presents the personhood of God confronting each individual.

Blake borrows much of Ezekiel's vivid pictorial quality: the throne and the living creatures; the wheels within wheels; the anthropological vision of God; the great dragon; the temple; the covering cherub, and the living waters. He makes use too of the severe realism of the prophet in exile:

> And when I passed thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.[2]

The concrete embodiment of Blake's imaginative insights is presented with all the dramatic immediacy of the active charioted God of Ezekiel's vision. The Merkabah may well be "a giant image for the prophetic state-of-being, for the activity of prophecy,"[3] as Bloom suggests, but to Blake it spoke first and foremost of a God who is eternally active in contrast to the Deists' parody of him. Like Ezekiel, it gave him confidence that he was the man to provide the vision in the time of need, for "as a man is, so he sees."[4]

[1] Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, Oxford, 1946.

[2] Ezekiel 16. 6.

[3] "Blake's Jerusalem: The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy", p. 15.

[4] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

Yeats's claim which I spoke of earlier, that Blake was "a too literal realist of imagination" who "hated every grace of style",[1] would appear to be directed at a supposed failure on Blake's part to see that the prosaic needed as much prosaic grace of style as the terrific needed terrific grace of style, for in his review of Richard Garnett's William Blake, Yeats wrote:

> The pity is, not that Blake did not write the 'Prophetic Books' in blank verse, but that he did not sustain the level of their finest passages.[2]

It is hardly sufficient to say with C.M. Bowra that "the purpose of the prophet, acutely aware of the relentless approach of the destruction of a surfeited society, runs against the delicate and precise probing of a bleak intellectualism",[3] for Yeats saw his own prose as having a similar rhetorical and oracular purpose to Blake's prosaic passages, and was himself moving towards a hardening and toughening of his poetry, towards that "stark directness, without a shadow of a lie, or a shadow of a deflection anywhere" of which Lawrence spoke. Bowra is right to write of the force and the depth of penetration of Blake's rhetoric in comparison to Shelley's, but his suggestion that "the poet and the prophet do not always work together, and as he grew older he seems to

1 "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy", The Savoy, Nos. 3--5, 1896.

2 Bookman, 10 (1896), 21.

3 The Prophetic Element, 1959.

have felt some strain in keeping them united, and the prophet comes more to the fore than the poet", is largely a restatement of Yeats's criticism.

In attempting to answer this criticism, I have suggested that Blake deliberately employed a variety of poetic styles, and that, of these styles, the harsh and violent is by no means the most important. In the control which he exerts over his poetic material, comparison with Ezekiel is particularly relevant. Von Rad defends Ezekiel's artistic power, pointing to his strong sense of actuality and his "cool didactic detachment".[1] A similar detachment is evident in Blake's control over the poetry of Jerusalem, a control which is inseparable from his structural organization of the poem. The range and choice of poetic styles serves the overall design of the poem, with its movement towards Los's achievement of a tone and form at one with that of the Saviour's "mild song", and its recurring conflict of pity and wrath. Further samples of the poet's sustained control over his material will be examined in my analysis of Jerusalem in the sixth chapter of this thesis.

Ezekiel portrays his visions in terms of meaning. Though usually pictorial, detail is carefully selected and presented for its meaning. Blake's use of perspective

[1] Von Rad, op.cit., p. 223.

in his designs accompanying the text of the poem, portraying the symbolic importance of detail, enables him to express his visions "in a pulsation of the artery",[1] not bound by space and time. Blake's view of his designs, that "the more distinct, sharp, and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art",[2] was also his view of poetry. The text, like the designs, moves by way of contraries, with a continual sharpening of the poetic outline, leading from darkness to light, just as in the "Great Code of Art" itself, the nourisher of the imagination, and taking us from fall to the new Jerusalem.

[1] Milton 28. 62 and 29. 1--3.

[2] "A Descriptive Catalogue", No. XV, pp. 63--64, Erdman, p. 540.

CHAPTER VI.

A Reading of "Jerusalem".

1. Chapter One.

In this reading of Jerusalem my concern is primarily with the text of the poem, though not to the exclusion of the designs. In approaching the poem, my purpose has been to elucidate as well as to apply, to explain as well as to interpret. Insufficient attention has been given, in critical approaches to Jerusalem, to the fact that there is a clear narrative progression running through the poem, and I have attempted to clarify this progression. In a poem as full and as rich as Jerusalem it is neither desireable nor necessary to repeat what other commentators have written, and wherever I have borrowed from the major contributions, notably of Wicksteed, Bloom and Stevenson, acknowledgment is made.

In my note on the text of Jerusalem I discussed Michael Phillips's suggestion that Blake's rearrangement of the plates of Chapter Two in the Harvard and Mellon copies may have been for visual reasons, to improve the appearance of the book. Blake's deletion of the text from the first plate of the poem may well have been for similar reasons. Artistically, the first plate is much more effective as a frontispiece to the book without any

text, than in its earlier form. The deleted text itself is in no way out of keeping with the rest of the poem. It reveals Albion's situation at the beginning of the poem as that of the inactive, pre-existent state of pleasant repose which is the womb, a shadow of reality still ironically called his "lovely Land." This ironic tone is similar to the irony of the prophets in their description of those at ease in Zion, soon to be shaken out of their complacency, as in Amos 4. 4:

> That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of their flocks, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.

The Gothic archway of imagination, which permits Los's entry into Albion's deathly state, bearing the light of truth which is literally shown to be a lamp unto his feet,[1] becomes, when seen from inside, a gigantic Druidic Dolmen, with the only function of Albion's Sublime and Pathos being to support his "Spectrous Power" of Reason which forms a tomb for Jerusalem, "a Stone laying beneath." Just as Los enters in the complete self-sacrifice of true friendship, "for Albions sake Inspired", so the reader is called upon to participate and to behold Albion with pity.

As Wicksteed points out, it is the title itself which is central in the Jerusalem Title-page on Plate 2, rather

[1] Psalm 119, 105.

than the accompanying design. The subject of the poem is Jerusalem, just as the central concern of the Old Testament prophets was with the position of their physical and spiritual home:

> This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her.[1]

The design of the Title-page illustrates the basic dialectic of the poem: the full expression of potential in the small figures of flight, ascending freely with wings outstretched, and the still evident, but to increasing degrees, bound and restricted potential of the three lower figures. The large figures to the left and right of the page seem to represent blessing and sympathy respectively, but are impotent and unable to rescue the figure bound and trapped in the life of vegetation at the foot of the page, a figure resembling the Jerusalem who was described as "a Stone laying beneath" in the deleted text of Plate 1. The figures of blessing and sympathy are the sublime and pathos, powerless because of their enslavement to spectrous reason.

The first prose preface, on Plate 3, is addressed "To the Public", and begins with the division of the public into the sheep and the goats which the coming of the light inevitably brings. This is the reality with which the poem begins, but <u>Jerusalem</u> is to be an integrating work:

[1] Ezekiel 5. 5.

Therefore I print; nor vain my types shall be:
Heaven, Earth & Hell, henceforth shall live in harmony.

The first chapter, then, is prefaced by an address to the public, because it is to reveal the basic forces at work for integration or disintegration in human life. The deletions which Blake made from his first prose preface reveal a growing sense of determination, and perhaps also of isolation, similar to that experienced by Ezekiel at the beginning of his prophetic work:

Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead. [1]

So, Blake deletes any apologies for his poem, clearly demonstrating a new awareness of prophetic calling, and exhibits a much more severe attitude to his reader. Yet the theme remains the same. "The Spirit of Jesus is continual forgiveness of Sin." Jerusalem is to be a "more consolidated & extended Work" to meet the consolidation of Albion's situation, a situation which Blake sees as metaphorically eschatological in that it confronts a people with the ultimate issues of life and death; with the fulfilment or rejection of their national calling.

The opening lines of Jerusalem, and the design above them on Plate 4, express concisely and clearly the theme of

[1] ibid., 3. 8--9.

the poem. A youthful figure, though pressed into a tomb-like existence, rises again and is pointed to the words "Only Jesus." So too Albion must be reborn from the womb of his "pleasant shadow of repose", through the birth passage of eternal death, into the new life of Jesus's gospel of forgiveness.

In epic fashion we join Albion's story *in media res*, with the fall an only too present reality. Into this situation comes the Saviour with his "mild song", setting up an immediate contrast between the poet, whom the Saviour newly awakens with his song of love and friendship, as gentle as the morning sunlight, and Albion, who refuses to awake from his "Sleep of Ulro". The calm and controlled language of the Saviour's mild song, coming at the very beginning of Blake's epic, serves as a model for the poet whose task it is to rescue Albion from the depths to which he has fallen. There is an allusion in the song to the early chapters of St. Mark's Gospel, which record the growing opposition to Jesus, leading to its culmination when his brethren and mother come to take him away, supposing him to be mad. In the allusion to Mark 3. 31--35 in Plate 4. 11--13, Blake identifies Albion with Jesus in a more subtle way than later, when Jesus appeals that:

> . . . we are One; forgiving all Evil; Not seeking recompense!

Ye are my members O ye sleepers of Beulah, land
of shades! [1]

The identification earlier is both more complex and richer in that the attributing of madness to Jesus in the gospel by his family is now directed to Albion, who is seen to be the one who is really mad, as he "away turns down the valleys dark." Delusion and fear drives him, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, to hide his Emanation from God, believing that he is "a God afar off", and not a God of forgiveness.

Albion's language is the language of fear, accusing others and justifying himself. His desperation drives him relentlessly to self-destruction. The contrast between the controlled song of the Saviour and the panic-stricken protest of Albion could scarcely be more complete, nor more significantly placed, coming as it does at the opening of Blake's epic. Albion's greatest fears are of personal contact and of corporate unity, driving him instead towards hatred and possessiveness. The downward path to destruction which Albion is following is summed up in Blake's skilful juxtaposition of adjectives:

So spoke Albion in jealous fears, hiding his Emanation
Upon the Thames and Medway, rivers of Beulah:
dissembling
His jealousy before the throne divine, darkening, cold! [2]

[1] Jerusalem 4. 19--20.

[2] ibid.. 4. 33--35.

Albion's wilful rejection of salvation leads naturally to the first of the poem's powerful laments for England.[1] All of life and human society, including the capital and university cities, has been drawn into the meaningless, repetitive cycle of existence suggested by the Starry Wheels. Albion's desire for the indefinite has its outcome in "incoherent despair", and his possessiveness causes his mountains to "run with blood", while the land is become unrecognizable by the withering up of all its human perfections. Over against this Blake sets the work of the artist, whose creative potential must be evident first of all in clarity of vision in recognizing evil, in whatever form it presents itself, a central theme in the gospels. The poet, with outspoken clarity, reveals the evil manifest in the "terrible sons & daughters of Albion", just as Jesus recognizes Satan within Peter in the gospel.[2] The poet recognizes that the awakening of Albion can only be accomplished by his achieving the same characteristics displayed in the Saviour's mild song earlier, and so invokes his Muse:

> O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness & love;
> Annihilate the Selfhood in me, be thou all my life! [3]

The urgency of this call is impressed upon us as we see Jerusalem driven eastward as a pillar of cloud to join

[1] ibid., 5. 1--15.

[2] Matthew 16. 22--23.

[3] Jerusalem 5. 21--22.

Vala on the mountains, drawn into a world of chaotic voids and revolving mechanical wheels. Just as the glory of God is depicted in Ezekiel departing eastward from the temple, to rest on the mountain outside the city, so Jerusalem, the glory of man, has had to leave her temple, the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus, the Imagination, and already she has been partly assimilated into her new situation, "attracted by the revolutions of those Wheels."

The antithesis of Los and the sons and daughters of Albion, of the sheep and the goats, is intensified on Plate 5 by the contrast between the ascending figures, openly embracing life, and the two huddled and garmented figures, one apparently despairing, the other hoping, but both lacking the resolution to act. Blake's own particular interpretation of the conflict of the flesh and the spirit is depicted on Plate 6 in the determination of Los's posture, yet with the Spectre hovering over him ready to devour. W.H. Stevenson, in his edition of The Poems of William Blake, rightly refers to the Spectre as "an image with many connotations."[1] We are introduced to him as a "black Horror," and see him viciously and aggressively cursing Los and Albion, desiring to devour Los's humanity, and so we are prepared to recognize him when he takes more plausible shapes, but we see him too

[1] Stevenson, op.cit., p.635.

suffering pain in his own dividing, and having to be put to work by Los if the latter is to achieve his great task.

In protesting the poet's dedication and self-sacrifice, the Spectre makes his appeal to Los's indignation:

> .....Hut'n is the Father of the Seven
> From Enoch to Adam; Schofield is Adam who was New-
> Created in Edom. I saw it indignant, & thou art not moved!
> This has divided thee in sunder: and wilt thou still forgive? [1]

The reason for this is clear from Los's reply to the Spectre's claims. Though he has learnt that it must be pity which will unite Albion, he finds himself only too susceptible to the temptation of wrath, when it takes a form similar to Hand's "indignant self-righteousness." [2] Nevertheless Los tells his Spectre to comfort himself in Los's determination that time will bring about the integration which he seeks; an integration powerfully expressed in the design on Plate 7, signifying complete acceptance of life. The poet stands in the middle as the one who leads the way forward, triumphing over life, as in the figure above him, and also triumphing in the midst of life's fiercest conflicts, as with the lower figure.

Though he has learnt that Albion must be redeemed by

1 Jerusalem 7. 24--27.

2 ibid., 7. 73.

pity, Los is aware that he must have no pity on his own Spectre. "Inspired fury" is needed to deal with those desires which threaten the very life of the imagination in the poet:

> Thou art my Pride & Self-righteousness: I have found thee out:
> Thou art reveald before me in all thy magnitude & power
> The Uncircumcised pretences to Chastity must be cut in sunder! [1]

In his commentary to D.V. Erdman's edition of The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, Harold Bloom writes perceptively of how Blake achieves "the resolution of inner doubt and despair through seeing his inward struggle as an essential part of the poetic process, rather than just a merely personal psychic torment."[2] The clarity of vision with which Blake recognizes his own situation:

> I am inspired: I act not for myself: for Albions sake
> I now am what I am: a horror and an astonishment
> Shuddring the heavens to look upon me [3]

reveals a view of the artist as one who literally "lays down his life for his friends." Christ is the great archetype of the artist because Blake has identified imagination and love. Having shown us the reality of personal conflict transformed into poetic universality,

[1] ibid., 8. 30--32.

[2] Erdman, p. 846.

[3] Jerusalem 8. 17--19.

Blake goes on to speak about the process whereby this is achieved:

> ..... I took the sighs & tears, & bitter groans:
> I lifted them into my Furnaces; to form the spiritual sword.
> That lays open the hidden heart [1]

The contrast between this poetic process and the process of fall, as represented by Albion stretched upon the ground at the bottom of Plate 9, a situation in which "the beauty of/Eternity" is "look'd upon as deformity & loveliness as a dry tree", and where religion gives its blessing to the burying alive of all that is good, is expressed in the contrast between the two upper designs on Plate 9, where in the one the child plays safely in the company of the lion and the lamb, in response to the piper's song, and in the other, an Eve-figure offers a gift to a serpent, unaware of her mortal danger. It is the poet's task in Jerusalem to reveal the reality of the serpent, removing the veil of hypocrisy and ambiguity, letting England see the Babylon of cruelty she has allowed to grow up in her midst.

Joseph Wicksteed, in his William Blake's Jerusalem, is surely right in suggesting that Plate 10 is a late insertion, intended to elucidate various aspects of the poem,[2]

[1] ibid., 9. 17--19.

2 The catchword "To" at the foot of Plate 9 corresponds with the first word of Plate 11, but not with the first word of Plate 10. See Wicksteed, op.cit., pp. 124--29.

The prime concern of the plate is with Los's struggle with his Spectre, and it begins with a clear definition of that "Abstract objecting power" which is "the Spectre of Man". Spectrous reasoning proceeds by insisting on the imposition of absolute and mutually exclusive catagories of good and evil, "murderer of its own Body" in that it makes of morality a blind abstraction. Blake skilfully has the Spectre immediately exhibit two inevitable consequences of such abstract reasoning, in his vehement and indignant cursing of Los and his work, and in what Morton Paley perceptively points to as his Cowperian despair. [1]

> O that I could cease to be! Despair! I am Despair
> Created to be the great example of horror & agony
> also my
> Prayer is vain I called for compassion: compassion
> mockd,
> Mercy & pity threw the grave stone over me & with
> lead
> And iron, bound it over me for ever:[2]

The tenth plate is remarkable for the extent to which Blake is able to enter into and give expression to the complexity of feeling attendant on the belief in a God who feeds on sacrifice, and is "not a Being of Pity & Compassion", existing alongside the awareness that such a thing cannot be. Los's reaction to the deep pathos of the Spectre's words is a masterly example of true sympathy freed from sentiment:

[1] "Cowper as Blake's Spectre", Eighteenth Century Studies, 1 (1968), 236--52.

[2] Jerusalem 10. 51--55.

So spoke the Spectre shuddring, & dark tears ran down his shadowy face
Which Los wiped off, but comfort none could give! or beam of hope
Yet ceased he not from labouring at the roarings of his Forge [1]

The urgency of Los's labourings is further emphasized by the design on Plate 11. If, as Wicksteed persuasively argues, the winged Swan-woman is a representation of "the youthful Harlot's curse" of 'London',[2] then the folly of a society which produces such situations is expressed in the lower figure, into which the Swan-woman changes in time, a Ragan "wholly cruel".

The folly of the submission of Jerusalem, human liberty, to the power of Vala, or the attraction of all that is purely natural, lamented over by Erin and his fellow labourers, is satirically represented in the figure at the top of Plate 12, on the one hand extravagant and vain, "whose life is but a Shade", yet sprouting spectrous bat-like wings, for "animated and vegetated, she is a devouring worm".

Blake appears to draw directly from Ezekiel's loss of his wife for the dividing of Enitharmon from Los. Ezekiel follows God's instructions to "forbear to cry"

1 ibid., 10. 60--62.

2 Wicksteed, op.cit., pp. 129--30.

and "make no mourning for the dead",[1] when his wife is taken from him, and Los must learn in a similar manner never to look back but only to move forward and perform the task given him, despite the cost:

> ..... yet I feel my Emanation also dividing
> Such thing was never known! O pity me, thou all-
> piteous-one!
> What shall I do! or how exist, divided from
> Enitharmon?
> Yet why despair! I saw the finger of God go forth
> Upon my Furnaces, from within the Wheels of Albion's
> Sons: [2]

Los learns to forgo the desire to be pitied and comforted, just as Ezekiel did:

> So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded. [3]

The detailed description of the building of Golgonooza, with its numerous furnishings, is in stark contrast to the Starry Wheels of Albion's sons, for these are the abstract voids between the stars, the universe becoming more and more diffuse, the greater the distance from the infinite centre. Unlike the conflict between Los and his Spectre, Golgonooza has no place for loud thunderings and threatenings. Instead it is a reincarnation of those qualities which earlier we saw exhibited in the Saviour's mild song:

[1] Ezekiel 24. 17.

[2] <u>Jerusalem</u> 12. 7--11.

[3] Ezekiel 24. 18.

> The stones are pity, and the bricks, well wrought affections:
> Enameld with love & kindness, & the tiles engraven gold
> Labour of merciful hands: the beams and rafters are forgiveness:
> The mortar & cement of the work, tears of honesty:[1]

In his description of the fourfold city of Golgonooza, Blake internalizes Ezekiel's vision of the Living Creatures. In Ezekiel's book they form the divine chariot. In Jerusalem, divinity is borne within man himself:

> These are the four Faces towards the Four Worlds of Humanity
> In every Man. Ezekiel saw them by Chebars flood.[2]

As the revelation of a cosmic vision of personal and corporate completeness and integration, in which the fourfold forms of man's divinity achieve free expression, Golgonooza is Blake's response both to contemporary suffering and deprivation and to the wasting disease of melancholy, for:

> Around Golgonooza lies the land of death eternal, a Land
> Of pain and misery and despair and ever brooding melancholy:[3]

This vision takes living form in the Sons and Daughters of Los in a passage which, as Bloom suggests, is an attempt "to describe a poem's state of being."[4] Each of Los's

[1] Jerusalem 12. 30--34.

[2] ibid., 12. 57--58.

[3] ibid., 13. 30--31.

[4] Erdman, p. 848.

creations is "a translucent Wonder: a Universe within", opening up a way of seeing into the worlds of physical life, of the heart and of the mind, but never fully achieving what the poet desires, for "the western gate in them is clos'd". The creation of the poet is represented in the beautiful design on Plate 14 of the artist's vision of the female spirit of beauty, surrounded by a humanized universe and arched by the rainbow of love, in stark contrast to the design at the top of the page, where the universe as it appears to the reductive vision of scientific materialism in portrayed. The poet himself, as we see in the next plate, is always in danger of being assimilated into the modes of thought, "Reasonings like vast Serpents", which threaten him.

Design and text correspond closely on Plate 15 of the poem. A Satanic dispersion of the twelve Sons of Albion has taken place, forming a monstrous polypus whose tentacles encompass every nation and society on earth. Reuben, a type of normal, or rather, average humanity, having enrooted in a narrow strip of land, must uproot himself again, and expand and unite with Abraham, whose name, enlarged from Abram,[1] is in token of his increased spiritual awareness, as he flees from the Chaldea of spiritual blindness into expansion of his faculties.

[1] Genesis 17. 5.

In this, Abraham is a forerunner of the Christ, his arms outstretched in a gesture of self-sacrifice, in contrast to the child-sacrifice of the Valley of Hinnom, the Chaldea in which Albion sits "in Eternal Death".[1] Following his painful but essential uprooting, Reuben unites with Abraham in his flight, being borne along just as in the Edenic movement of Ezekiel's wheels, the divine man is borne along, and just as Abraham is literally to bear the Christ. Their flight is a movement towards harmony, a deliberate act of choosing freedom, in contrast to the counter movement of Blake's "wheel without wheel", which, "with cogs tyrannic/Moving by compulsion each other", would deny man imaginative salvation, restricting him like Reuben, "in the narrow Canaanite/From the Limit Noah to the Limit Abram".

In order to meet the situation where the whole creation groans in its bondage, longing for deliverance, Blake expands upon his identification of Albion's land with the Holy Land of the Bible, and attempts a unity of cosmic and specific vision. Stevenson writes of the identification of the counties of Wales, England and Scotland with the lands of the twelve tribes of Israel that "the purpose

[1] Jerusalem 15. 33--34. Because of the practice of witchcraft in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom (2 Chronicles 33. 6), and the practice of child-sacrifice (Jeremiah 7. 31), the name of the valley was changed to The Valley of Slaughter (Jeremiah 7. 32).

seems to be formal and rhetorical: to recollect the Old Testament passages where boundaries are carefully delineated (e.g. Joshua 12--21), and to attempt the solemnity which absolute formality can bring, as in Paradise Lost i. 407--411: 'From Aroer to Nebo and the wild/Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon/And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond/The flow'ry vale of Sibma, clad with vines./And Eleale to th' Asphaltic Pool.'" [1] Stevenson is right to point to the artistic purpose of the catalogues, for as the passage immediately following in Plate 16. 61--69 shows, in its discussion of the nature of the relationship between art and reality, Blake's identification of England with Israel is not concerned with geography or history, but with art. It is an example of the renewing power of art, for "every Age renews its powers" from the "bright Sculptures of/Los's Halls". Jerusalem is to be builded in England, and Albion's land is to become the Holy Land again, just as soon as the identification is perceived to be imaginatively true. All actions are recorded in Los's halls, so that art knows no restrictions, but reveals "All that can happen to Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years". As a living organism bearing the record of all that can happen, it is here that the motivating power for all new action is to be found, so that nature is completely dependent on art for its energies. It is for this reason that Blake writes

[1] Stevenson. op.cit., p. 656.

in Milton that "Los is by mortals nam'd Time".[1]

Plate 17 sees Los's conflicts reach a new height, yet despite their intensity he remains resolved to be faithful to his poetic calling, and along with that, to his practical situation. Los dare not attempt to deal with the Daughters of Albion lest he be consumed by their terrible and intoxicating beauty, for "in every bosom they controll our Vegetative powers", and lest he be brought to a "resurrection to forgetfulness". The Daughters of Albion, whose names are listed on Plate 5. 40--44, are all women in positions of power over man. They seek to maintain their power and domination by their seductive but deceitful charm, refusing sexual satisfaction, exulting in chastity. In compelling his Spectre to subdue the Daughters of Albion, Los not only protects himself, and has no need to fear for the Spectre, who is attracted only by abstractions, but knows that they will find the Spectre's brute force irresistible, imagining that it will assist them to destroy Enitharmon, just as Vala's pretence of love for Albion was intended to bring about the destruction of her rival, Jerusalem. Los knows that he is fully able to deal with the Sons of Albion himself, for they are direct and murderous in their attacks, their weapons being abstractions in religion and philosophy.

[1] Milton 24. 68.

The extent of Los's "soft desires & loves" for Enitharmon leads him to exult greatly in the self-defeating nature of the malice and envy of his opponents, for as explicitness reveals evil stripped of its ambiguity, their malice will serve only to give added force to his poetic achievements:

> ..... tell Hand & Skofield they are my ministers of evil
> To those I hate, for I can hate also as well as they! [1]

Each of Los's poetic achievements, as the redemptive process continues with the passage of time, contributes to bring about a reunification of man and his universe, undoing the work of "Envy, Revenge & Cruelty", negative forces:

> Which separated the stars from the mountains, the mountains from Man
> And left Man a little grovelling Root outside of Himself. [2]

Los's predictions of ultimate triumph, and his victory in the conflicts through which he has already passed, lead Blake to give us a more detailed and explicit description of the situation and nature of the Sons of Albion on Plate 18. Beyond the firm outlines of human identity is a void in which we find such negating forces

[1] Jerusalem 17. 62--63.

[2] ibid., 17. 31--32.

as despair, doubt and deprivation, and it is in this void that the Sons of Albion live and move and have their whole being. They seek the destruction of everything that establishes the identity of humanity in love and self-denial, especially as it is found in the religion of Christ, "With transgressors meeting in brotherhood around the table". Blake emphasizes the extent to which Hyle and Coban, the two emissaries of war and hate, exist beyond the outline of human identity, in lines which present them, in Bloom's words, as "reflections sent forth by a reflection": [1]

> And Hyle & Coban were his [Hand's] two chosen ones,
> for Emissaries
> In war: forth from his bosom they went and return'd.
> Like Wheels from a great Wheel reflected in the
> Deep. [2]

The prophetic judgment on Jerusalem of the Sons of Albion is a Satanic perversion of the judgments of the Old Testament prophets, for their attitude is characterized by jealousy and shame, and their language of hysterical hatred resounds in "thunders hoarse", the sound associated with the Satanic wheels, "with cogs tyrannic/ Moving by compulsion each other", in contrast to the mildness of the Saviour's language, a mildness which, as we have seen, Los must succeed in achieving if he is to

[1] Erdman, p. 849.

[2] Jerusalem 18. 41--43.

accomplish his saving work. A truly prophetic message of judgment is one which seeks to provoke a new spiritual awareness, and is a message of love and of affirmation of human identity, so that in choosing Babylon rather than Jerusalem, the "Mother of pity and dishonourable forgiveness", the Sons of Albion are in fact suicidally rejecting their own being.

In direct contrast, the design on Plate 18 is an affirmation of harmony and identity, and is a foretaste of the reintegration which the poem seeks to bring about, and which is hinted at in the reminder of former unity and co-operation in l.7:

(For Vala produc'd the Bodies. Jerusalem gave the Souls)

The movement towards brotherhood is depicted in the two children rising to embrace one another from the two larger figures who each stretch out a right foot to touch each other.

The lament for Albion which follows and continues into Plate 19 is a picture of Albion in the hell which he has created for himself, where the scene of utter desolation soon gives way to the scene of bitter and murderous thoughts within Albion's mind. He shows no sign of concern for his exiled children as they pass

before him, for the whole world, in becoming external to him, has thereby become a threat to him. In erecting a rocky barrier against the Divine Humanity, Albion has closed himself up against the light of love, creating his own tomb, and leaving his Center, or the depths of his being, to wither and die for lack of light:

> Albions Circumference was clos'd: his Center began darkning
> Into the Night of Beulah [1]

If Albion were not blind in his stubborn refusal to respond to the appeals of love, he would see in his twelve sons the terrible results of their earlier rejection of their own being. Taking the form of a "Satanic Mill", themselves enslaved and seeking to enslave others wherever possible, they:

> Revolve upon his mountains groaning in pain: beneath
> The dark incessant sky, seeking for rest and finding none:
> Raging against their Human natures [2]

The same results are evident in the design on Plate 19 of the fallen Albion, wept over by his friends, and the gradual degeneration of the figures which rise from him and move round the page in an anti-clockwise direction, beginning with the potential for liberty still evident, but gradually being incorporated more and more into the hell

[1] ibid., 19. 36--37.

[2] ibid., 19. 21--23.

of pain and despair which we see in the figures moving across the upper margin of the page.

There is a treacherous and sinister beauty in the lines which portray Jerusalem and Vala embracing one another, for we already know that Vala's intention is to destroy Jerusalem with "a pretence of love to destroy love", and that Jerusalem has been deceived and enslaved by her "cruel hypocrisy": [1]

> He found Jerusalem upon the River of his City soft repos'd
> In the arms of Vala, assimilating in one with Vala
> The Lilly of Havilah: and they sang soft thro' Lambeth's vales,
> In a sweet moony night & silence that they had created
> With a blue sky spread over with wings and a mild moon [2]

Their "assimilating in one" is in fact nothing less than the possessing and devouring of Jerusalem by Vala, and the "blue sky" a net which entraps Jerusalem with its deceitful beauty.

The sight of Albion's fallen state, however, startles Jerusalem into a recognition of her situation, and the loss of her former innocent delight in life. Vala too is not so fallen as to have forgotten their former unity, as represented in the design at the top of Plate 20, but she

[1] ibid., 17. 24--27.
[2] ibid.. 19. 40--44.

dissembles, "hiding in her veil", and suggests that Jerusalem is indulging in wishful thinking and foolish dreaming, for the winter of human life is inevitable and must be accepted, just as the wanderer must know both summer delights and winter remorse, and the slave look back to happy times of former freedom. Such a necessitarian philosophy is indeed a veiling of the truth, though Vala's dissembling persuasiveness leaves Jerusalem more thoroughly perplexed than ever. The deviation of this from a true understanding of life is expressed in the two lower designs on Plate 20. The first, dissecting Vala's reply to Jerusalem, represents Vala's philosophy when stripped of its deceitful appearances. Wicksteed is perhaps right in suggesting that it represents Hand and Hyle pulling, and Scofield behind pushing, the plough of materialistic philosophy, a coercive and rationalistic force dragging Vala and the natural world along after it.[1] Below we have a visionary representation of the same theme, with the fourfold man leading the outward facing fiery desires of the divine humanity, Blake's version of the vision of Ezekiel.

Jerusalem's confusion is evident in her appeal to Vala's mercy, without fully recognizing the cruelty and self-righteousness implicit in the names by which she addresses Vala:

[1] Wicksteed, op.cit., pp. 151--52.

..... unfold thy Veil in mercy & love!
Slay not my little ones, beloved Virgin daughter
of Babylon,
Slay not my infant loves & graces, beautiful
daughter of Moab.
I cannot put off the human form [1]

Jerusalem is driven to appeal to Vala's humanity by her memory of the former unity which they both possessed with Albion and with the Lamb of God, in a beautiful picture of fourfold harmony and love.

Albion, in his first speech since his frightened and stubborn rejection of the Saviour's pleading with him at the opening of the poem, begins again on exactly the same note of attempted self-justification, blaming both Vala and Jerusalem for his unhappy situation. He presents himself as a Job-figure, left alone and without hope, the victim of his former friends:

O Vala! O Jerusalem! do you delight in my groans!
You, O lovely forms, you have prepared my death-cup.
The disease of shame covers me from head to feet.
I have no hope.
Every boil upon my body is a separate & deadly Sin. [2]

In fact we already know that Albion is entirely culpable for his own situation, and his claim that he has been deserted by his friends, and that the whole universe has separated from him is the inevitable outcome of his attitude at the beginning of the poem:

[1] Jerusalem 20. 26--29
[2] ibid., 21. 1--4.

My mountains are my own, and I will keep them to myself:
The Malvern and the Cheviot, the Wolds Plinlimmon & Snowdon
Are mine, here will I build my Laws of Moral Virtue! [1]

Consistently in his speech Albion sees things as the opposite of what they really are. Having blamed Vala and Jerusalem for a situation he himself has brought about, he accuses Jerusalem of being the dissembler, and sees his only hope in Vala's ability to "weave a chaste / Body over an unchaste Mind!" His aim is to hide his sin, of which he is only too aware, with a pretence of virtue, and to "cover Gwendolen & Ragan with costly Robes / Of Natural Virtue". He sees the former unfallen state of his daughters, in the innocence of their childhood, as a time when "their every thought was Sin & secret appetite". Because of this, Hand's cruel and heartless scourging of the daughters, as depicted in the design on Plate 21, seems to him to have been a necessary evil. His regret over the suffering of his daughters, combined with the conviction that it was to some extent just, leads inevitably to the summing up of these conflicting feelings in the psychologically appropriate final two lines of the plate:

Are the Dead cruel? are those who are infolded in moral Law
Revengeful? O that Death & Annihilation were the same.! [2]

[1] ibid., 4. 29--31.

[2] ibid., 21. 48--49.

Albion's impotence, which permitted his daughters to be taken into the Chaldea of slavery, is again evident in his absorption with his feelings of having been wronged, and his preoccupation with notions of sin and guilt to the exclusion of any awareness of forgiveness, either for others or for himself.

Vala, like Albion, is totally bound up with herself. There is no question of dialogue here, but rather we have a series of monologues in which Albion and Vala attempt to justify and defend themselves, leading only to greater self-torment. Vala spreads her "scarlet Veil" over Albion, linking her with the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, and sitting upon a scarlet beast in Revelation 17. 1--5. Vala has already been associated with this woman, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth",[1] in Plate 18. 29--30. Like Albion, Vala seems to be not so much dissembling here, as deceived about herself, in presenting herself as a Christ-figure, the crucified victim of Albion's sons. Her rescue by Nimrod and Cush, hunters of men, is effected so that she may be borne "in a golden Ark", symbol of victory in war, before Nimrod's armies, inspiring them to greater deeds of hatred by her own record of having fed on "the flesh of multitudes" in battle. Again like Albion, self-righteousness has blinded her, and finding

[1] Revelation 17. 5.

sin in Albion, she knows nothing of forgiveness, and can never return to him in love. With the moon, in this plate a symbol of the love which is absent, significantly silent, Albion speaks again, but again only to lament the wrongs which have been done to him, and which he claims to have done nothing to deserve:

> I brought Love into light of day, to pride in chaste beauty,
> I brought Love into light, & fancied Innocence is no more [1]

Having listened to the growing and uncreative introspection of this series of monologues, Jerusalem complains that Albion's dissecting, rationalizing and anatomizing attitude, brooding relentlessly on sin and victimization, is destroying her, and can lead only to despair and ever increasing melancholy:

> **Then spoke Jerusalem:** O Albion! my Father Albion!
> Why wilt thou number every little fibre of my Soul,
> Spreading them out before the Sun like stalks of flax to dry?
> The Infant Joy is beautiful, but its anatomy
> Horrible, ghast & deadly! nought shalt thou find in it
> But dark despair and everlasting **brooding** melancholy! [2]

We have already seen how rejection of Jerusalem, as in the case of the Sons of Albion, is a suicidal destruction of one's own identity, and this is made explicit on this plate, when Albion, utterly turning his back on Jerusalem, wi th the bitter irony of the suicide wishing the

[1] Jerusalem 22. 17--18.

[2] ibid., 22. 19--24.

non-entity of the only one who can give him life, desiring that Jerusalem "wert not & that thy place might never be found", offers himself as a sacrifice to Vala:

> But come, O Vala, with knife & cup, drain my blood
> To the last drop, then hide me in thy Scarlet
> Tabernacle [1]

In illustration of Los's confident prediction that, given a body, falsehood may be cast off, Albion's perverse desire for death provokes Jerusalem to the visionary gesture of reaching out towards the moon in an epiphany of realization. The contrast of the Wings of Cherubim, symbols of mercy,[2] and the "Iron Wheels of War", is reproduced in the design at the bottom of Plate 22.

Jerusalem's illumination provokes Albion, in a lament which is a parody of Jesus's lament over Jerusalem in Matthew's Gospel, 23. 37--38, to a further attack on Jerusalem as unreal and unlawful, yet at the same time moved by her words, and made aware of something outside of his brooding sense of guilt. He perceives that the veil, which he had earlier rent in love, has now appeared again in all its deceitful beauty, but accuses Jerusalem of having created it, unaware that he has brought it about himself. Jerusalem is now able to see with remarkable clarity, and her reply to Albion represents a fourfold insight, a divine

[1] ibid., 22. 29--30.

[2] Exodus 25. 20.

illumination, into the true nature of her own position, of the nature of Albion, of Vala and of the Saviour:

> Father once piteous! Is Pity a Sin? Embalm'd in Vala's bosom
> In an Eternal Death for Albion's sake, our best beloved.
> Thou art my Father & my Brother: Why hast thou hidden me,
> Remote from the divine Vision: my Lord and Saviour.[1]

Her position, which she recognizes to be"hidden . .. . from the Divine Vision", is portrayed in the upper design on Plate 23. Jerusalem is a true Christ-figure, as the crosses on her feathery wings show. Yet her situation is not without hope, for two small figures struggle upwards from her reclining body.

Ironically, Albion still sees love and pity as self-annihilating complacency and "soft repose", for he himself has been embracing annihilation since the beginning of the poem, and we know that it is he who in fact dwells in repose. Despite his inability to escape being confronted with "Humanity and Pity", it is a confrontation which leads only to the renewed despair of "sick pallid languor" and self-condemnation, for he can still see only in terms of "Moral Virtue" and "Cruel Laws". His words are an accumulation of errors which lead to the living death of the imprisoned figures among the cavernous tombs of the dead in the lower designs on Plate 23. Albion emphatically

[1] Jerusalem 23. 9--12.

rejects the possibility of anything other than a God of cruel punishments, a God afar off, subjecting Albion to his vengeance, and making his children "trembling victims of his Moral Justice". His attack on Jerusalem as a "deluding Image" culminates in his cursing of mankind:

> ..... Therefore O Manhood, if thou art aught
> But a meer Phantasy, hear dying Albions Curse!
> May God who dwells in this dark Ulro & voidness, vengeance take,
> And draw thee down into this Abyss of sorrow and torture,
> Like me thy Victim, O that Death & Annihilation were the same! [1]

On Plate 24, however, "Two bleeding Contraries equally true", two realities which Albion cannot deny, rise up against him to cause him to repent his curse on mankind. These are the contraries of the crucifixion and the resurrection. Albion recalls his Druidic past, and the time when shame overcame him with sudden awareness of the terrible evils he was committing, evils which left his land barren and desolate. Albion's death lament is also his first moment of epiphany, when he is overcome with utter remorse and true repentance, but it is an illumination which he does not yet have the strength to sustain. Before this moment of insight, however, he has moved from the perplexed questioning of a Lear towards the nihilism of a Macbeth:

[1] ibid., 23. 36--40.

O what is Life & what is Man. O what is Death?
Wherefore
Are you my Children, natives in the Grave to
where I go
Or are you born to feed the hungry ravenings of
Destruction
To be the sport of Accident! to waste in Wrath &
Love, a weary
Life, in brooding cares & anxious labours, that
prove but chaff. [1]

Albion comes as close as he can to a complete awareness of the truth, and a resurrection to his former glory, and to being cradled himself in the saving ark, represented by the crescent moon floating on the black waters of material concern in the upper design on Plate 24, and his memory of youth and love, when the nations dwelt together in unity and concord, leads him to a precise and detailed description of the evils of Babylon, the negation of Golgonooza and Jerusalem:

The Walls of Babylon are Souls of Men: her Gates the
Groans
Of Nations: her Towers are the Miseries of once happy
Families.
Her Streets are paved with Destruction, her Houses
built with Death
Her Palaces with Hell & the Grave; her Synagogues
with Torments
Of ever-hardening Despair squard & polishd with
cruel skill [2]

However sudden self-pity seizes him again and he loses sight of the illumination he has achieved. Again it is the sense of having been wronged that diverts his attention:

[1] ibid., 24. 12--15.
[2] ibid., 24. 31--35.

> If God was merciful this could not be: O Lamb of God
> Thou art a delusion and Jerusalem is my Sin! [1]

Although he sees mercy beholding him in the "Slain Lamb of God", his reason still tells him that it cannot be, for the Lamb of God still "liest dead in Luvah's Sepulcher", and it is reason rather than vision which Albion trusts, as he dies in the Saviour's arms in resignation and acceptance of his fallen condition, for:

> Thundring the Veil rushes from his hand Vegetating Knot by
> Knot, Day by Day, Night by Night; loud roll the indignant Atlantic
> Waves & the Erythrean, turning up the bottoms of the Deeps [2]

Albion's situation, completely under the domination of his daughters, is portrayed on Plate 25 of the poem, where the three figures perform their threefold work of holding him bound, intoxicating him with false beauty, and narrowing to the minimum his field of vision.

The lament of the Daughters of Beulah with which the first chapter of the poem ends, in contrast to the work of the Daughters of Albion, brings the chapter full circle, in that it is another mild song, deliberately recalling the Saviour's with which we began. As if to emphasize the circular movement, Blake ends the chapter exactly as

[1] ibid., 24. 53--54.

[2] ibid., 24. 61--63.

he began it, in the Sleep of Ulro. The Daughters of Beulah deplore the forms of Druidic religion that the Sons of Albion have created, and especially that most evil and injurious force of all, the destroying work of vengeance, the slayer of the Divine Lamb himself. As with the Saviour's mild song, their lament emphasizes the unity of all creation, so that the suffering of one is necessarily the suffering of all:

> For not one sparrow can suffer, & the whole Universe not suffer also
> In all its Regions, & its Father & Saviour not pity and weep. [1]

The redeeming work that must be accomplished is "the Creation of States & the deliverance of Individuals Evermore", for it is only through this that Albion can be set free from the destructive power of self-condemnation. It is the Saviour's work to show him that he is redeemable, for he is not to be blamed for his external circumstances, but at the same time, to show that he is also free to pass through states, for they are stages to learn from but then to discard. As Blake writes in "A Vision of the Last Judgment", "These States Exist now Man Passes on but States remain for Ever he passes thro them like a traveller". Albion is to progress by freeing his mind from being governed by what is external to him, by a reality imposed upon him. The Daughters of Beulah claim that it is the

[1] ibid., 25. 8--9.

function of religion to reveal this truth and so remove all sense of self-condemnation.

2. Chapter Two.

The full-page designs on Plates 26, 51, and 76 have an obvious intermediary function in the progression of the poem. They reflect upon the chapter that has gone before, and lead us straight into the chapter which follows. On Plate 26 Blake reminds us of the state in which we left Jerusalem, but, as ever, will not allow us to see the state as more than a temporary stage, for while it is sufficient for the Sons of Albion, stern upholders of law, uniting here in the figure of Hand, to name Jerusalem as Liberty to condemn her, ironically, their abuse is the pitying reader's reassurance. Continually in Jerusalem the Sons of Albion succeed only in bringing about the opposite of their intentions, for their actions are ultimately self-defeating. At this stage, however, Jerusalem cowers weakly before the strength and deceitfulness of Hand, obviously both in awe and fear of him. In presenting himself as a Christ-figure, calling upon her to follow him, or at least pity him, it is clear that Hand's cross to which he is fastened is a serpent, and that he is encircled by the flames of hell.

Blake addresses his second chapter "To the Jews", because of their central position and intimate involvement in the quest to transform history into vision. Yet the truths about life perceived by the Jews are the common

possession of all mankind:

Ye are united O ye Inhabitants of Earth in One Religion.
The Religion of Jesus: the most Ancient, the Eternal:
& the Everlasting Gospel.

The basis of Blake's imaginative identification of Israel and Britain, with Jerusalem built in England, is the former wholeness of man's apprehension of life:

Her Little-ones ran on the fields
The Lamb of God among them seen
And fair Jerusalem his Bride:
Among the little meadows green.

The work of Satan, separated from Albion's loins as his Spectre, signifying that hatred and war have basically sexual roots, is summed up in terms which describe much of the action of the first chapter of the poem:

He witherd up the Human Form,
By laws of sacrifice for sin:
Till it became a Mortal Worm:
But O! translucent all within.

The Biblical concept of community, which Blake so perceptively grasped, stands behind his attack on the degeneration of the idea of the family, which he sees as having become merely an extension of the false idea of the individual as the basic social unit, in that it had become an isolated unit set over against other family units, in the process destroying the openness of brotherhood and community which is the basis of the Saviour's appeals to Albion, and which is the goal of Blake's vision, when:

In my Exchanges every Land
Shall walk, & mine in every Land
Mutual shall build Jerusalem:
Both heart in heart & hand in hand.

The second chapter of Jerusalem, then, is a call for the return of the spiritual Israel to "Take up the Cross O Israel & follow Jesus" in the path of "Mental Sacrifice & War."

Plate 28 opens with Albion having become the "punisher & judge" of all action, for to act has become criminal, and we see him condensing all the perfections of his former state, hiding himself in secrecy and attacking anything that grows from love or friendship as perverse and unnatural, affirming man's identity in separateness rather than in unity. In direct contrast to this situation, Blake will not permit us to forget the beauty of all that Albion finds "horrid to think of", as represented in the design of the couple embracing in the heart of a water-lily, symbol of innocence. The rest of the plate telescopes the gradual growth in Hebrew history of concepts of Moral Virtue, represented as a "deadly tree" replacing the Tree of Life, of the apartness of God, of human sacrifice for atonement instead of self-sacrifice for others, of justice without mercy, and of sin without forgiveness. It is as the stern upholder of such a monstrous universe, a "Strong / Fortification against the Divine Humanity", that we find Albion at the beginning of the second chapter of the poem.

At the appearance of Satan, Albion's Spectre, we are told that he is an "Unformed Memory", emphasizing his insubstantiality and thus the absurdity of his position of dominance and power. He presents Albion with the ultimate reductive view of man, seen merely in terms of scientific analysis, and depicted in the design on Plate 29:

> I am your Rational Power O Albion & that Human Form
> You call Divine, is but a Worm seventy inches long
> That creeps forth in a night & is dried in the morning sun
> In fortuitous concourse of memorys accumulated & lost
> It plows the Earth in its own conceit, it overwhelms the Hills
> Beneath its winding labyrinths, till a stone from the brook
> Stops it in midst of its pride among its hills & rivers. [1]

Satan, "Worship'd as God" by the peoples of earth, is in fact a devouring Angel of Death, passing over Albion's cities and destroying the prime of Albion's life. Again Blake telescopes various aspects of Old Testament history in depicting Satan as not only the Angel of Death, but at the same time as the source of the flood and of the moral law:

> And shall Albions Cities remain when I pass over them
> With my deluge of forgotten remembrances over the tablet [2]

[1] Jerusalem 29. 5--11.

[2] ibid., 29. 15--16.

The appearance of Vala is as the usurper of the position rightly Jerusalem's. To Albion she is the loveliest, before whom the Divine Vision is as nothing, but this is hardly surprising, for she takes the form of "life abstracted", and she is hermaphroditic in her "gloomy pomp" and "darkness immingled with light", and her immediate effect is the fading of life and joy. Vala's claims for herself are immense, presenting herself as the beginning and the end, as Eden and as the new Jerusalem. Her claim that:

> I was a Garden planted with beauty I allured on hill & valley
> The River of Life to flow against my walls & among my trees [1]

is reminiscent of the former position of the Prince of Tyre in Ezekiel's prophecy, of whom it is said:

> Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. [2]

Like the Prince of Tyre, Vala has fallen from her former glory and magnificence, but the irony of her appeal to Albion, and his attraction to her, is that in rejecting her past she presents herself as the reversal of the truth, claiming now to be the incarnation of beauty, entitled to dominance over man, and to be reality of which all else is

[1] ibid., 29. 37--38.

[2] Ezekiel 28. 13.

shadow, for "The Imaginative Human Form is but a breathing of Vala".[1]

Albion sees in Vala the image of his repose, but it does not yet appear to him as it really is, a state of death, the repose of the tomb. In succumbing to Vala's godlike claims over him, which as Stevenson suggests, speaks of his acceptance of the physical and the natural as the total reality,[2] Albion allows himself to be completely unmanned:

> A dewy garment covers me all over, all manhood is gone!
> At thy word & at thy look, death enrobes me about
> From head to feet, a garment of death & eternal fear.[3]

However Albion has not entirely lost the illumination which he gained, but was unable to translate into action, at the end of the first chapter. He is still able to perceive eternity, and aware of the situation into which he has come, for he recognizes that "the high Cliff of the Atlantic is become a barren Land". Albion's enslavement to Vala provokes Los to a cry of rage against Hand and his brothers for allowing Albion to become the "Tabernacle of Vala & her Temple", and in his association of the cries of birth with the groans of death, to lament the

1 Jerusalem 29. 49.

2 Stevenson, op.cit., p. 684.

3 Jerusalem 30. 4--6.

domination of woman over man "from Cradle to corruptible Grave", for:

> There is a Throne in every Man, it is the Throne of God;
> This, Woman has claim'd as her own, & Man is no more! [1]

The contrast between the former wholeness of man's apprehension of life, when it was that "every English Child is seen, / Children of Jesus & his Bride", and the present withered state of "Jerusalem's Gates", is clearly expressed in the incidents involving Reuben in Chapter Two. Apart from Karl Kiralis's essay, "A Guide to the Intellectual Symbolism of William Blake's Later Prophetic Writings",[2] Reuben has not received a great deal of critical attention, whereas an examination of his symbolic function in Jerusalem underlines the depth of the coherence of Blake's design in the poem.

The situations which involve Reuben in the second chapter are not the isolated incidents they have often been taken to be, and as Kiralis seems to see them, when he writes in the same essay, that "many seemingly disconnected things occur to him".[3] The introduction of Reuben on Plate 30 is directly related to Los's attacks on Hand and the other sons of Albion. Hand, who is described earlier

[1] ibid., 30. 27--28.

[2] Criticism, 1 (1959), 190--210.

[3] ibid., p. 197.

as condensing his thoughts into bars, to be forged into "the sword of war",[1] is under the dominion of Vala, who was herself fed and nourished in childhood with "the flesh of multitudes",[2] and Los's purpose is to recount how this present situation of Hand's being completely unmanned has come about.

Reuben is a doubly representative figure. His name testifies to his normality, and he is the eldest son of Israel, as Jacob came to be called. However, by enrooting into Bashan, he eventually becomes merely "a vaporous Shadow in a Void", and just as his father's name was changed to Israel to signify his change of character, so Reuben's is changed to Hand to signify his corruption into a vicious accuser, in his role as representative of the Hunt brothers, editors of the Examiner. As David V. Erdman has shown is his study, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, Blake focuses his attention on "the Cerberus of the press, the triple editorial person of the Examiner collectively called Hand because of the accusing 'indicator' or printer's fist of Leigh Hunt's editorial signature."[3] Reuben's enrooting into Bashan, the rocky kingdom of Og, speaks of the freedom of man to choose the state in which

[1] Jerusalem 9. 4--5.

[2] ibid., 22. 6.

[3] Erdman, op.cit., rev. ed., 1969, pp. 458--59.

he dwells, which may be a state of humanity, or in this case, of inhumanity, for of Og it is written:

> For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? [1]

As the representative of the tribe which settled with Gad and half of Manasseh east of the Jordan, outside the Promised Land, Reuben is the very incarnation of Albion's problem of being enslaved and corrupted by his passive nature:

> Reuben slept in Bashan like one dead in the valley
> Cut off from Albions mountains & from all the
> Earths summits. [2]

Los's work of sending Reuben over the Jordan has been variously understood. Kiralis surmises that "What Blake must have had in mind here was the fact that Reuben as a 'Vegetative Man' (36: 23--24) was not ready for the Promised Land and so Blake interprets the Biblical Reuben's decision to remain on the east side of the Jordan. Los therefore was trying to force the hand of Providence, since Reuben was eventually to settle on the east bank and his descendants preferred to live there." [3] This is very close to the truth. Los's work is made more comprehensible if we see it as Blake's refashioning of the events

[1] Deuteronomy 3. 11.

[2] Jerusalem 30. 43--44.

[3] Kiralis, op.cit., pp. 199--200.

of Joshua 22, where the Reubenites build their altar over against the Promised Land. In this chapter, Joshua calls the Reubenites, together with the Gaddites and the half tribe of Manasseh, to come from their home east of the Jordan, to receive his blessing. This they do, and return home again to the other side of the Jordan. On the way home, they build a great altar, which the Israelites assume to be a claim by the Reubenites of their own separate identity over against the rest of the people, so that they prepare to go to war with the Reubenites. Peace is restored when it is made clear that the opposite was, in fact, the intention, for the Reubenites wished the altar, built at the Jordan, to be a symbol of solidarity with Israel, lest it should ever be said that the Jordan formed a frontier between Israel and Reuben. Blake's reworking of the story is to say, in effect, that the building of the altar was indeed an inhuman act, and that in accepting the explanation of the Reubenites, the Israelites were becoming what they beheld, seeing evil as good. Los begins, then, by organizing and giving distinct form to Reuben's weaknesses, in contracting his senses, and presents him to the people of earth, that they may see the reality of their situation:

> Los rolled his Eyes into two narrow circles, then sent him
> Over Jordan; all terrified fled: they became what they beheld. [1]

[1] Jerusalem 30. 53--54.

Although those living in delusion and the "pleasant shadow of repose", cannot face the reality of their own situation when they see it, the artist knows that there is a principle at work whereby, though individuals may flee the reality, the community is gradually changed, in the process of time, into what it beholds.

The story of Reuben in Jerusalem is an expansion of Blake's words earlier in the poem, when Los says that he labours in order:

> That he who will not defend Truth may be compelled to
> Defend a lie, that he may be snared & caught & snared
> & taken. [1]

Although it may appear that Los's work is rejected, in that the people flee from the revelation of themselves which he sets before them, the description of his situation, "standing on Mam-Tor, looking over Europe & Asia," emphasizes the vantage-point of the artist of which I have just spoken. The reference of this to Blake's own situation, and the reason he addresses himself to Hand, as the representative of the fiercest attacks on his work, is clear. At the beginning of the poem, in calling upon the Saviour for the "Spirit of meekness & love", the work of the poet is seen to be not only writing of the building of Golgonooza, but also:

[1] ibid., 9. 29--30.

> ..... of the terrors of Entuthon:
> Of Hand & Hyle & Coban, of Kwantok, Peachey, Brereton,
> Slayd & Hutton:
> Of the terrible sons & daughters of Albion. and their
> Generations. [1]

Blake's confidence is that the results of his epic will be analogous to the results of Los's giving distinct form to Reuben's weaknesses, as a necessary stage on the path to reintegration:

> ..... every-one that saw him
> Fled: they fled at his horrible Form: they hid in
> caves
> And dens; they looked on one-another & became what
> they beheld. [2]

The horror from which the people flee is the truth which the poet reveals about them, as is borne out by the warnings which Los draws from his refashioning of the events of Joshua 22:

> If Perceptive Organs vary: Objects of Perception
> seem to vary:
> If the Perceptive Organs close: their Objects seem
> to close also: [3]

Los's work for Reuben is paralleled by a similar act of the Saviour for Albion, giving two limits to his fallen condition, called Satan and Adam. The Saviour's voice is the voice of the universal man, of "multitudes without number". Again he enters the furnace in the appearance

[1] ibid., 5. 24--26.

[2] ibid., 30. 48--50.

[3] ibid., 30. 55--56.

of a man to save the law-breakers from the punishment of their judges, as in the instance described in the Book of Daniel, when a fourth man was seen in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, "and the form of the fourth . . . like the Son of God."[1] Here it is also in pity of the punisher that the Saviour comes, for as we saw at the very beginning of the chapter, Albion is now "the punisher & judge" as well as the victim, and as Los realized, Albion can only "be united by / Pity". The Saviour's pity, and his counsels which once again are described as mild, are a reinforcement to Los at this time of the lessons he needs to learn if his work is to be accomplished. He must put off wrath and take to himself pity and mildness.

The Saviour works by revealing that the laws of Moral Virtue and Natural Religion are death "to every energy of man, and forbid the springs of life". Seeing this man is set free from his state of self-condemnation for not having kept them:

> Albion goes to Eternal Death: In Me all Eternity.
> Must pass thro' condemnation, and awake beyond the Grave![2]

In doing this the Saviour fulfils the call for the deliverance of individuals by the creation of states which ended Chapter One. The design on Plate 31 shows the creation

[1] Daniel 3. 25.

[2] Jerusalem 31. 9--10.

of Eve from the sleeping Adam by the Saviour, whose nail marks are clearly visible, and his creative work here is the type of that work which is described on the text of the plate, which is the resurrecting of man from his state of "the Sleep of Ulro", and the deliverance of individuals for evermore. Such a work is self-sacrificial, for the Saviour's form is that of the cross, and he bears about him the flames of the furnace into which he enters to achieve his act of redemption, the flames of sacrifice rather than those of destruction which surrounded Hand on Plate 26.

Reuben, as we see from Plate 32, is still in the process of being conformed to the fallen world, and has not yet reached the stage of confining his desires to the attainable. When fully conformed to the world, he will have learned that physical and aesthetic satisfaction are not possible:

> Reuben return'd to his place; in vain he sought beautiful Tirzah,
> For his Eyelids were narrow'd & his Nostrils scented the ground [1]

The design at the top of Plate 32 shows Los labouring mightily, raging "in the Divisions of Reuben, / Building the Moon of Ulro plank by plank & rib by rib". In other words, Los labours to give form to the material world, in

[1] ibid., 32. 1--2.

order that its delusions may become evident, and man be free to release hiself from them. We are reminded at this stage that this is a retrospective summary, called forth to explain the nature of Hand, and how he came to be in the state in which we found him. Hand is a Reuben who has turned towards the reasonings which characterize Heshbon, whose springs issue into the Dead Sea, and who finds only frustration and doubt in daily life, for "In the love of Tirzah he said Doubt is my food day & night".[1]

With four of Reuben's senses turned outward and limited, Blake explains precisely the relationship between his symbolic figures:

> Hand stood between Reuben & Merlin, as the Reasoning Spectre
> Stands between the Vegetative Man & his Immortal Imagination [2]

Just as Reuben's father became an Israel, so Reuben may become a Hand or a Merlin, the very incarnation of Albion's fall into destruction or of his potential. As the flood of limited sense perception and materiality pours in upon Albion, Blake reminds us of the state from which Reuben has fallen, and of the potential which he still retains:

> The Atlantic Continent sunk round Albion's cliffy shore,

[1] ibid., 32. 7.

[2] ibid., 32. 23--24.

> And the Sea poured in amain upon the Giants of Albion
> As Los bended the Senses of Reuben. Reuben is Merlin
> Exploring the Three States of Ulro: Creation, Redemption & Judgment [1]

These lines have been made much more difficult than they really are. Kiralis writes that "If the quotation read 'Reuben could be Merlin' rather than 'Reuben is Merlin,' then Northrop Frye's explanation of these lines ('Reuben purified of his selfhood would become a prophetic imagination') would be highly acceptable and desirable." [2] In fact, the Reuben whom we see exploring Ulro, and whose senses have been contracted, is Merlin, the "Immortal Imagination". Blake is concerned to emphasize that Reuben's only true identity is Merlin, for as the poem constantly affirms:

> There is an Outside spread Without, & an Outside spread Within
> Beyond the Outline of Identity both ways, which meet in One:
> An orbed Void of doubt, despair, hunger & thirst & sorrow. [3]

This reminder of man's true identity is set over against the war which is taking place within Albion himself, where the "Four Eternal Senses of Man" gradually become "Four Elements separating from the Limbs of Albion" until

[1] ibid., 32. 38--41.

[2] Kiralis, op.cit., p. 201.

[3] Jerusalem 18. 2--4.

they change into "Four ravening deathlike Forms."[1] At the same time, England divides into Jerusalem and Vala, the results of which are traced throughout the poem, and Luvah, one of the Zoas, creates a parody of the Christ, resurrecting as a "dark Spectre".

As D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis point out in their commentary on Jerusalem, the laughter of the Eternals at the disarray and confusion that has come to pass among the inhabitants of Albion's land reminds us of the laughter in heaven, in Paradise Lost, at the confusion resulting from the attempt to build the Tower of Babel:[2]

> ..... each to other calls
> Not understood, till hoarse, and all in rage,
> As mock'd they storm; great laughter was in Heav'n
> And looking down, to see the hubbub strange
> And hear the din. [3]

A similar confusion reigns in Albion's land, where "a Man dare hardly to embrace / His own wife for the terrors of Chastity that they call / By the name of Morality".[4] The Eternals present two remedies for this situation, though the two are in effect one. The first is the shocking boldness of true art and science which reveals the truth in all its "Naked Beauty", and the second is

[1] ibid., 32. 31--35.

[2] The Prophetic Writings of William Blake, 2 vols., Oxford, 1926, Vol. 1, p. 511.

[3] Paradise Lost 12. 57--61.

[4] Jerusalem 32. 45--47.

the work of the Divine Mercy who will not leave man in the state of torment, where he first enslaves himself to his own view of reality, and then fails to see that the process can be reversed, and that hope can change reality if accompanied with action, as the Divine Mercy demonstrates, for:

> ..... What seems to Be: Is: To those to whom
> It seems to Be, & is productive of the most dreadful
> Consequences to those to whom it seems to Be: even of
> Torments, Despair, Eternal Death [1]

We left Albion frowning "in anger / On his Rock", in Plate 30, and as Los steps forward from among the Divine Family in Plate 33 it is to rebuke Albion for his thunderous wrath against the Eternals. Los still has a struggle between wrath and pity, and here he is provoked to a wrath like Albion's, with loud threatenings of making Albion's imprisonment permanent for the time of mortal life. When love reveals again to Los just how vulnerable Albion really is, and he sees "blue death in Albion's feet", Los is able to rejoin the Divine Family, "following merciful". This double theme of divine mercy and of vulnerability is represented in the two designs on Plate 33. The upper design shows Albion fallen into the Sleep of Death, beside the Druid oak of weeping, supported by Jesus who stands before the palm tree of suffering. The winged disk upholding the figures may well be, as Kathleen Raine suggests in

[1] ibid., 32. 51--54.

her book, Blake and Tradition, a "symbolic depiction of the world upheld by God," following the similar use of the symbol in Stukeley's Avebury, and in Bryant's Mythology.[1] The lower scene, by contrast, takes place upon the sea of Hyle, and shows Jerusalem on a couch with a devouring bat-like figure hovering over her as a parody of the angel of God.

Albion fortifies himself against the persistent mercy of the Divine Family, fearing lest any should come into personal contact with him, and the contrast we have been tracing throughout the poem between the loud thunderings that are associated with fallen humanity, and the mildness and pity of the Saviour, which Los must fully enter into if Albion is to be redeemed, is now explicitly stated:

> Turning from Universal Love petrific as he went,
> His cold against the warmth of Eden rag'd with loud
> Thunders of deadly war (the fever of the human soul)
> Fires and clouds of rolling smoke! but mild the
> Saviour follow'd him,
> Displaying the Eternal Vision! the Divine
> Similitude!
> In loves and tears of brothers, sisters, sons,
> fathers, and friends
> Which if Man ceases to behold, he ceases to exist.[2]

In illustration of this contrast, another of the Saviour's "mild songs" follows. Through the expansion of the

[1] Vol.2, pp. 261--62.

[2] Jerusalem 34. 7--13.

senses, the Universal Family can be seen as it really is, One Man, called Jesus the Christ. The Saviour describes the unity and harmony that results from perceiving this truth of the oneness of mankind as the life of Eden, "the land of life. / Giving, receiving, and forgiving each others trespasses."

Blake then presents us with one of his own moments of epiphany. It is one of several such moments of illumination, for he writes that:

> ..... I heard in Lambeths shades:
> In Felpham I heard and saw the Visions of Albion
> I write in South Molton Street, what I both see
> and hear
> In regions of Humanity, in London's opening streets.[1]

Blake's vision is of the role of the cities in the redemption of Albion, and of the establishment of the New Jerusalem in London, who offers himself to become the place where human life may flourish, to be seen to be the city of Golgonooza, his streets "Ideas of Imagination", his inhabitants "Affections". The culmination of this vision is similar to Ezekiel's vision in the valley of bones, a reversal of everything that evil has achieved, and a restoration of humanity to its place of centrality:

> .... for Cities
> Are Men, fathers of multitudes, and Rivers & Mountains
> Are also Men; every thing is Human, mighty! sublime!

[1] ibid., 34. 40--43.

In every bosom a Universe expands, as wings
Let down at will around, and call'd the Universal Tent. [1]

The gateway into such a vision is not visible to ordinary sense perception, and can only be revealed by those who have eyes to see. It is the vision of all things humanized, and thus it is "Seen only by Emanations, by vegetations viewless", closed to all but the human imagination. It is closed to "Satan's Watch-fiends", for clinical analysis, "numbering every grain / Of sand on Earth every night" will never discover it. There is also the sense in which these lines speak of the growing feeling of isolation and the tension of rejection on the part of Blake himself. His poem is a Gate of Los, veiled only to those who would seek to destroy it, to Satan's watch-fiends among his own contemporaries. The same sense of the blind destructiveness of opposition is expressed in the design on Plate 35. Wicksteed is probably right in his suggestion that the upper figure is the swift horseman of time.[2] He is one of Satan's torturers, and thus represents time in its inhuman, or endlessly repetitive sense, and indeed there is this image of repetitiveness in the design in the suggestion of a long row of horsemen, all with arrows ready to fire. The lower design seems to me much more than, as Wicksteed suggests, "a great setting sun,"

[1] ibid., 34. 46--50.

[2] Wicksteed, op.cit., pp. 169--70.

"another symbol of passing Time."[1] The sun is setting in such a way as to remind us of the Satanic "Iron Wheels of War", the "wheel without wheel" depicted on Plate 22. Again the symbol speaks of the abstracted and reductive vision of Satan's fiends. which they would seek to impose upon all men, destroying the human imagination.

Outside the gate stands the "Mill of Satan", unknown and beyond discovery by mortal man, for it is the mill of eternal death, and thus the source of the system of moral virtue. The real reason, though, why the mill cannot be found by mortal man, and the reason why Los sees with the greatest horror that Albion has fled from him until he stands on the very threshhold of its cruel tortures, is that it is outside the realm and scope of mercy:

> ..... but no mortal man can find the Mill
> Of Satan, in his mortal pilgrimage of seventy years
> For Human beauty knows it not: nor can Mercy find it![2]

It is the place of deliberate and unrepentant rejection of forgiveness and mercy, a very real place of complete despair, and so Los's soul is "rent in twain" when he beholds Albion about to enter such a situation. Los tries to convince Albion of the irreconcilibility of atonement with mercy, but Albion's blindness is that he still sees himself as a Job-figure, rather than the source of

[1] ibid., p. 170.
[2] Jerusalem 35. 4--6.

his own conflicts and sufferings:

> God hath forsaken me, & my friends are become a burden
> A weariness to me, & the human footstep is a terror to me. [1]

The constant and effective shifting of the scene back and forward from the fleeing Albion, lamenting his forsakenness and condemnation, to the Divine Family, "following merciful", continues on Plate 36, where we find Los and the friends of Albion whom he has called together, "every Valley, every mournfull Hill / And every River", trembling at this new horror; the possibility of Albion, on the brink of the abyss, casting himself into the mill of eternal death. The sense of corporate fear is expressed in the very effective alliteration of the description of Albion's friends, who:

> ..... silent, sick, stand shuddering
> Before the Porch of sixteen pillars: weeping every one [2]

The effect of Albion's crisis, a crisis that is cosmic in its scope, for the danger is that "the immortal mansion / Of man, for ever be possessed by monsters of the deeps; / And Man himself become a Fiend, wrap'd in an endless curse,/ Consuming and consum'd for-ever in flames of Moral Justice"[3];

[1] ibid., 35. 22--23.

[2] ibid., 36. 6--7.

[3] ibid., 36. 27--30.

is cumulative, for the response of Albion's friends, driven to action by the extremity of the situation, provokes the cities to rush to Albion's help too, borne on chariots "by the Living Creatures", just as the divinity was borne along in Ezekiel's vision in the opening chapter of his book. The redemptive work that can be achieved by these fellow labourers with Los is portrayed in the design on Plate 36, which Wicksteed aptly describes as the work of culling the red grape of beatitude in this world, and restoring the poetic vision to its rightful place.[1]

Blake's attempt to convey the cosmic nature of the crisis at this point in imitation of the Miltonic style, and to suggest a similarity between Albion's Spectre and Milton's Satan, is not wholly successful in that the Miltonic imitation tends to remain unassimilated into the rhythmic flow and the language of the rest of the poem:

> For had the Body of Albion fall'n down, and from its dreadful ruins
> Let loose the enormous Spectre on the darkness of the deep,
> At enmity with the Merciful & fill'd with devouring fire,
> A nether-world must have receivd the foul enormous spirit [2]

Much more successful is the picture Blake gives us

[1] Wicksteed, op.cit., p. 170.

[2] Jerusalem 36. 31--34.

immediately after this of true self-sacrifice and its results, in what Bloom has called a "miniature myth of salvation": [1]

> Selsey, true friend! who afterwards submitted to be devourd
> By the waves of Despair, whose Emanation rose above
> The flood, and was nam'd Chichester, lovely mild & gentle! Lo!
> Her lambs bleat to the sea-fowls cry, lamenting still for Albion.[2]

Blake's tribute to the language, "English, the rough basement," whose "stubborn structure" acts against "Albion's melancholy, who must else have been a Dumb despair", is "roughly humorous" yet moving, as Bloom suggests.[3] It is a twofold tribute; a recognition of the priority, as well as the creativeness, of the word which is the life of mankind,[4] and which is used, as in Tristram Shandy, to fend off the ever present disease of melancholy. It is also, of course, a specific tribute to the strength of the English language, its resilience under pressure. What Blake may have had in mind were the criticisms which Robert Lowth faced, of the indelicacies of Hebrew literature. Lowth's answer was to suggest that "mean" images were reflections of what were in fact noble activities,

[1] Erdman, p.852.

[2] Jerusalem 36. 48--51.

[3] Erdman, p. 852.

[4] See Genesis 1. 3, Hebrews 1. 3, Deuteronomy 8. 3, John 1. 1.

but to Blake the unashamed honesty and directness of Hebrew language would have been its great strength. Blake pays the same tribute to English. It strains against false smoothnesses, maintaining its closeness to the earth and its contact with more primitive forms of life in rejection of imposed stylization.

Continuing on the theme of Albion's cities, Blake introduces Bath by identifying him with Legions, the Welsh centre of military power at the time of the Roman invasion. Bath is Legions, as well as being "benevolent Bath", just as Reuben was both Merlin and Hand. He is on the one hand the physician, as the place of healing springs, and on the other, the poisoner, having been founded by Bladud the necromancer, and also, as Stevenson's note points out in his commentary on the poem, the subject of "Merlin's famous prophecy (in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History)" which "foretells that 'the baths will grow cold at Bath and its healing waters bring forth death.'" [1] As Legions, Bath had sought to reduce and cast out Jerusalem, to subject her to his "delights of cruelty", "weaving black melancholy as a net".

In her flight from Bath, Jerusalem seeks the repose of death, but instead finds true repose, protected by the

[1] Stevenson, op.cit., p. 698.

Daughters of Beulah, for she flies in the direction of "Lambeths mild Vale", the place of Blake's former inspiration, the place of truth and reality, for there "Rephaim terminates", the ghostly and inhuman land of shadows. Here, in Lambeth's vale, we find Jerusalem and Vala enjoying that true unity, "hid in soft slumberous repose", which they were described as having known at the first.[1] This is the reversal of their earlier soft repose, when Albion found them "upon the River of his City".[2] The difference between unity and their earlier perversion of it is made clear in that no longer is Jerusalem "assimilating in one with Vala", but rather enjoying true integration. The significance of Lambeth is not as the world counts significance. The way into Oothoon's palace, essentially the palace of care and love, for it is a place of security for Jerusalem and Vala, is through a "Grain of Sand . . . that Satan cannot find", a grain of sand, because its true significance is not immediately apparent, and indeed invisible but to the eye of imagination. The reference can only be to Blake himself and to his work. These veiled claims for his poetry are Blake's way of making clear that he is only concerned with justifying himself to those who can penetrate into Oothoon's palace in the first place. It is the poet's version of the earlier protest to Dr.

[1] Jerusalem 20. 7--10.

[2] ibid., 19. 40--47.

Trusler that "That which can be made explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care",[1] making it clear that the idiots are Satan's Watch-fiends:

> There is a Grain of Sand in Lambeth that Satan cannot find
> Nor can his Watch Fiends find it: tis translucent & has many Angles
> But he who finds it will find Oothoons palace, for within
> Opening into Beulah every angle is a lovely heaven
> But should the Watch Fiends find it, they would call it Sin
> And slay its Heavens & their inhabitants in blood of punishment [2]

Returning to the cities, we find the familiar combination of despair and self-condemnation again producing the inevitable result of impotence. We find consistently in Jerusalem Blake's insistence on the Biblical theme of the impossibility of faith and self-condemnation co-existing, and the inevitable enslavement to despair and inactivity which the latter brings. In stark contrast to this passive and ineffective "deep humiliation" is the work of the Zoas who:

> ..... in terrible combustion clouded rage
> Drinking the shuddering fears & loves of Albions Families
> Destroying by selfish affections the things that they most admire
> Drinking & eating, & pitying & weeping, as at a tragic scene.
> The soul drinks murder & revenge, & applauds its own holiness [3]

[1] Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23 August 1799.

[2] Jerusalem 37. 15--20.

[3] ibid., 37. 26--30.

Bloom is surely mistaken in seeing in these lines evidence that "Blake, like Shelley, D.H. Lawrence, and others in his line of vision, repudiates tragic art for reasons as profound as they are disputable." [1] Blake says nothing here about tragic art itself. What he condemns is the indisputable fact that it can often be the case that far from undergoing catharsis of any kind, the individual "drinks murder & revenge," all the while applauding his own superiority and self-righteousness. At no stage does Blake suggest that tragic art calls forth such a distorted response.

The design on Plate 37 is again in contrast to the feverish activity of the Zoas as they go about their destructive work. The reversed writing, hidden from those who will not see, reveals that the figure represents "Man in his Spectre's power", bound in his introspective self-condemnation and misery. It is the reversal of that outgoing "soft repose" of brotherhood, in which we saw Jerusalem and Vala resting earlier in the plate, affirming their identity in communion rather than in isolation.

Plate 38 is remarkable as a truly Blakean form of the earlier Miltonic attempt to convey the cosmic scope

[1] Erdman, p. 852.

of the possibilities facing Albion, as we saw on Plate 36. 25--40. First of all we see the results, in the Zoas themselves, of their disunity, causing them to be "Victims to one another", and each in his own way incapable of action:

> Urizen, cold & scientific: Luvah, pitying & weeping
> Tharmas, indolent & sullen: Urthona, doubting & despairing [1]

The cities are in a similar situation in that they have lost their motivation to act. Seeing the destruction and cruelty resulting from the conflicts of Albion, they recognize that if they go the way of wrath, such a response would be self-defeating, and Albion would only be provoked to even greater torments, and to killing Jerusalem herself. On the other hand they also recognize that mercy and pity would involve self-sacrifice, and they fear the struggle and the annihilation of selfhood that this would entail. Their choice of the third alternative, that of calling upon God to descend and do what they are unwilling to do, gives the incident the function of a parable, which Los later expands, revealing its true significance, raging against their hypocrisy and fearfulness in the face of Albion's greatest crisis:

> If we are merciful, ourselves must suffer destruction on his Oaks!
> Why should we enter into our Spectres, to behold our own corruptions

[1] Jerusalem 38. 2--3.

O God of Albion descend! deliver Jerusalem from the Oaken Groves!
Then Los grew furious raging: Why stand we here trembling around
Calling on God for help; and not ourselves in whom God dwells
Stretching a hand to save the falling Man: [1]

In his great speech which follows, Los presents his vision of the rendering of every energy of man into its opposite, in an accumulation of all those forces which are negative and corrupt, incorporating at the same time his own defence of true poetic values. The influence of the negative powers of the Zoas which were revealed at the beginning of the plate has brought into being a world of pretences, creating "A pretence of Art, to destroy Art: a pretence of Liberty / To destroy Liberty. a pretence of Religion to destroy Religion". The abstractions of "Generalizing Art & Science" have replaced "the Only General and Universal Form" of the Divine Humanity. The replacement of mental warfare with the cruelties of physical war has reached the stage where even the closest friends quarrel:

Oshea and Caleb fight: they contend in the valleys of Peor
In the terrible Family Contentions of those who love each other: [2]

In this reference to conflict between Joshua and Caleb,

[1] ibid., 38. 9--14.

[2] ibid., 38. 37--38.

the only two who remained faithful to God in the wilderness, and the only two of those who left Egypt to enter the promised land,[1] Bloom is probably right to see "an allusion to a quarrel between Blake and a close friend, Fuseli I would guess, or less likely Flaxman, but an artist in any case."[2] This is all the more likely in view of the inevitable sense of the loneliness of the true artist in Los's firm and heroic resolve to stand alone for Albion's sake, in a passage that Blake seems to have based on Abdiel's similar heroic resolve in Paradise Lost v. 896--900:

> I will not endure this thing! I alone withstand to death,
> This outrage! Ah me! how sick & pale you all stand round me!
> Ah me! pitiable ones! do you also go to deaths vale? [3]

Los does not, of course, have Abdiel's angelic self-sufficiency, and there is pathos in his appeal for support:

> ..... yet speak to me and give
> Me some comfort: why do you all stand silent? [4]

Roused by Los's appeal, the cities rise and seek to become the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision, intending to raise Albion to his own divinity, and bear him along

[1] Numbers 14. 30.

[2] Erdman, p. 853.

[3] Jerusalem 38. 71--73.

[4] ibid., 38. 76--77.

against his will to Eden, "with kindest violence". However they cannot prevail against the Satanic wheels which Albion employs to bear him back towards Ulro, wheels which, as we saw earlier, are "the abstract Voids between the Stars".[1] The cities have to learn that if they are to win Albion, they must not take him on at his own game, and attempt to coerce him into freedom. These are means which defeat their own ends, and it is not difficult for Albion to control those forces which belong to him, and fortify the abstract voids, so that:

> . . . every little particle of light & air, became
> Opake
> Black & immense, a Rock of difficulty & a Cliff
> Of black despair; that the Immortal Wings labourd
> against
> Cliff after cliff, & over Valleys of despair &
> death:[2]

The design on Plate 39 depicts this attempt of the cities to bear Albion to Eden, using the symbol of the saving ark being borne on the wings of the cherubim across "The narrow Sea between Albion and the Atlantic Continent", which Albion causes to become:

> ..... a boundless Ocean bottomless,
> Of grey obscurity, filld with clouds & rocks &
> whirling waters [3]

[1] ibid., 13. 37.

[2] ibid., 39. 10--13.

[3] ibid., 39. 15--16.

As the design shows, the Divine Family take no part in this well-meaning attempt to rescue Albion, knowing its futility, for:

> . . . as the Will must not be bended but in the day of Divine
> Power: silent calm & motionless, in the mid-air sublime,
> The Family Divine hover around the darkend Albion.[1]

The rest of Plate 39 briefly describes the nature of the Ulro in which Albion exists, to show why it cannot be overcome with violence, and why the cities, having entered it, now become "Strucken with Albions disease", and lose their emanations. Whatever enters Ulro becomes inextricably entangled in its "Spectrous Uncircumcised Vegetation", and is drawn into being a component part of its "Sexual Machine", "an Aged Virgin Form" which has penetrated even into "Erins Land", where imagination builds its bulwark against the tides of abstraction, and freedom rises from its bonds. Here the typical form of the Aged Virgin is the mixture of sexual love and jealousy which has come to be known as religion. Coercion is one of Ulro's mechanistic elements, and any use of coercion can only reinforce Ulro's power. Having entered Ulro and become caught up in its methods, the cities begin the inevitable process of disintegration, as they "become what they behold". The same process is described in other terms when Blake speaks of the cities losing their emanations,

[1] ibid., 39. 18--20.

for their emanations are their freedom:

> Man is adjoind to Man by his Emanative portion:
> Who is Jerusalem in every individual Man: and her
> Shadow is Vala, builded by the Reasoning power in
> Man [1]

In handing over their powers to Los, "Naming him the Spirit of Prophecy, calling him Elijah", the cities open up the possibility of their desire for Albion's safety and rescue being accomplished in the only effective way:

> O search & see: turn your eyes inward: open O thou
> World
> Of Love & Harmony in Man: expand thy ever lovely
> Gates. [2]

The secret of Los's power is his awareness that, in Novalis's words:

> Nach Innen geht der geheimnisvolle Weg. In uns oder nirgends ist die Ewigkeit mit ihren Welten, die Vergangenheit und Zukunft. [3]

The difficulty of interpreting Bath's lament for Albion on Plate 40, has been noted by several commentators on the poem, notably Bloom and Erdman. Much of the difficulty arises from failing to note the intentional ambiguity in Blake's introduction of Bath immediately

[1] ibid., 39. 38--40.

[2] ibid., 39. 41--42.

[3] Blütenstaub, Gesammelte Werke, 2 vols., Zürich, 1945, Vol. 2, p. 13.

preceeding his speech. Just as earlier he was "benevolent Bath / Bath who is Legions: he is the Seventh, the physician and / The poisoner: the best and worst in Heaven and Hell",[1] so now his voice is "faint as the voice of the Dead in the House of Death", yet at the same time he is still "Bath, healing City! whose wisdom in midst of Poetic / Fervor: mild spoke thro' the Western Porch, in soft gentle tears". It can hardly be claimed that Blake has not prepared us for paradox in Bath's words. Bloom seems wrong to claim that "It is deliberately a weak speech, because it is meant to fail, since only the secret, creative work of Los can save the nation and that only in the fulness of time," for we have already been told that Bath speaks here with wisdom, and the speech leads directly to the action of the cities in embracing "Eternal Death for Albions sake". He is much closer to the truth when he writes that "Yet it is not straightforward, and is designed to show 'the futility of speaking out,' as Erdman (p.443) puts it."[2]

The design which introduces Plate 40 shows us a figure, perhaps Albion, entangled in the weeds of the Sexual Machine which is Ulro, with his emanation departing from him. Below, several small fish, perhaps represent-

[1] Jerusalem 36. 61 -- 37.2.

[2] Erdman p. 853.

ative of the cities of Albion, swim unawares into the mouth of a large fish to be swallowed up and devoured by it; again a warning of the devouring nature of Ulro.

Bath has been identified by Erdman as Richard Warner, who in 1804 published a sermon entitled War Inconsistent with Christianity. Bath's speech on Plate 40, his appeal to Albion, is one which Erdman suggests "amounts to an anti-war sermon ('leaves of the Tree of Life') urging mercy and inveighing against imperial selfhood or British national pride in almost Warner's terms":[1]

> ..... however high
> Our palaces and cities, and however fruitful are our fields
> In Selfhood we are nothing: but fade away in mornings breath.[2]

The substance of Bath's lament, and its wisdom, is in seeing how far Albion has fallen from the great example that he was, to the "piteous example of oblivion" that he has become. In conveying this, however, he has the tendency to use what Bloom calls "weak moralizings"; his language easily becomes affected, and slips into weak personifications of envy, mistrust and suspicion. He becomes passive, just as the cities had done earlier, earning Los's angry rebuke for their helplessness,[3] and

[1] Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, rev.ed., 1969, p.440.

[2] Jerusalem 40. 11--13.

[3] ibid., 38. 12--15.

calls upon the Lamb of God to descend and achieve what he cannot do himself. This passivity quickly develops into fatalism:

> Albions Western Gate is clos'd: his death is coming apace!
> Jesus alone can save him; for alas we none can know
> How soon his lot may be our own. [1]

There is also a very definite suggestion that his words are not as creative and effective as they should be in the description of the lack of response to his speech:

> So spoke, unhear'd by Albion, the merciful Son of Heaven
> To those whose Western Gates were open, as they stood weeping
> Around Albion: but Albion heard him not; obdurate! hard! [2]

His speech is not a failure, but at the same time it has no success in turning Albion from his path to destruction, though it provokes the other cities to join Bath in giving themselves to Eternal Death for Albion's sake.

In the middle of the list of the cities who offer themselves for Albion, which Blake provides on Plate 41, we are introduced to Oxford the Immortal Bard, who:

[1] ibid., 40. 17--19.

[2] ibid., 40. 33--35.

..... with eloquence
Divine, he wept over Albion: speaking the words of God
In mild perswasion: bringing leaves of the Tree of Life. [1]

Bloom is probably right to refer to Blake's treatment of Oxford here as "certainly satirical", who after so much promise, can make only a feeble contribution to Albion's need, and even then it is more than he can withstand, for "Oxford trembled while he spoke, then fainted in the arms / Of Norwich". Each of the cities which Blake lists brings its own gifts to contribute to Albion's situation, and Oxford's presence is as the "Immortal Bard" whom Bath hopes will succeed in reviving Albion "with eloquence / That thy immortal tongue inspires". In his failure to achieve more than a weak appeal to Albion to rest in Beulah until a better day arrives, he is a type of the artist who promises much at the outset, and perhaps gives much cause for confidence, but who lacks in his own being the endurance and dedication to continue and to accept the cost, if like Los he is to "rest not from my great task / To open the Eternal Worlds". His inadequacy is reinforced by the poem's immediate return to the furnaces of Los, who, when the disease evident in Oxford first revealed itself in the cities, leaving them "sick & pale", resolved to "alone remain in permanent strength": [2]

[1] ibid., 41. 7--9.

[2] ibid., 38. 77--78.

..... and the Furnaces of Los
Began to rage, thundering loud the storms began to roar
Upon the Furnaces, and loud the Furnaces rebellow beneath [1]

Part of the function of the designs in the poem is to keep continually before us certain vital images, while the text of the poem leads in other directions. On Plate 41 the Satanic imitation and perversion of Ezekiel's chariot, bearing the divinity, is portrayed in the chariot of the three headed serpent, itself a perversion of the Trinity, drawn by unwillingly yoked human-lions, provoked by demons, and bearing two aged figures, one perhaps the "Aged Virgin Form" of Plate 39, and the other Time in his Ulro form. This is the "Religion / of Generation, to destroy by Sin and Atonement, happy Jerusalem, / The Bride and Wife of the Lamb", a religion of vengeance which Blake laments at the end of this plate.

In direct contrast to this image of coercion is the image on the next plate, Plate 42, of mutual cooperation and dependence, depicted in the support given to each other by a column of figures, enabling the topmost figure to reach and luxuriate in the clusters of grapes which hang from the top of the page. The same cooperation prevents Los from suffering the same fate as Albion when the furnaces are opened, and the reality of Albion's

[1] ibid., 41. 20--22.

disease is revealed. In a sudden moment of insight Albion sees that Ulro is made up of the very things he loves, a sight which causes his soul to die within him. The Divine Saviour prevents Los from suffering a similar fate by letting him see past the present reality into the timeless and ultimate reality:

> Also Los sick & terrified beheld the Furnace of Death
> And must have died, but the Divine Saviour descended
> Among the infant loves & affections, and the Divine Vision wept
> Like evening dew on every herb upon the breathing ground [1]

Albion becomes a Lear-figure in his direct assault on Los, cursing supposed ingratitude in his children and demanding justice, but the effect of his attack is self-defeating, and only serves to reawaken Los to his task:

> Thou art in Error; trouble me not with thy righteousness.
> I have innocence to defend and ignorance to instruct:
> I have no time for seeming; and little arts of compliment,
> In morality and virtue: in self-glorying and pride.[2]

Los is willing to bear all Albion's desires for revenge, for as we saw earlier on Plate 17, Los sent the Spectre to deal with the Daughters of Albion, "for he / Dare not approach the Daughters openly lest he be consumed / In

[1] ibid., 42. 5--8.

[2] ibid., 42. 25--28.

the fires of their beauty", knowing himself competent to withstand the open and direct attacks of Albion's Sons. Here he has no fear of Albion's vengeance because he sees that the Saviour comes at the very limit of contraction to redeem and revive:

> But when Man sleeps in Beulah, the Saviour in mercy takes
> Contractions Limit, and of the Limit he forms Woman: That
> Himself may in process of time be born Man to redeem[1]

Sloss and Wallis suggest that this Plate, Plate 42, was "interpolated to introduce a more direct exposition of Blake's . . . antagonism to punitive morality."[2] Los's speech is an unsentimental illustration of this point of view. He responds with firm but unretaliating defiance to Albion's cries for his death. Meanwhile the struggle recorded earlier between Los and his Spectre is repeated to a lesser degree here in the cities, now entrapped in Ulro, and bitterly repenting their former human kindness. Their Spectres have deceived them in just the same way as Los's Spectre would earlier have deceived Los:

> ..... Wilt thou still go on to destruction?
> Till thy life is all taken away by this deceitful friendship? [3]

[1] ibid., 42. 32--34.

[2] Sloss and Wallis, op.cit., p. 519.

[3] Jerusalem 7. 9--10.

The cities are torn between accepting their Spectre's protests against forgiveness, and enduring their afflictions, looking for the morning of the resurrection.

The appearance of the Divine Vision on Plate 43, "like a silent Sun", takes us back to the opening lines of the poem, where the Saviour appeared at sunrise to awake the sleeper with his mild song. Here again, as the sun appears in the midst of the catastrophic results of Albion's stubbornness, above "Albions dark rocks: setting behind the Gardens of Kensington / On Tyburns River, in clouds of blood", the Human Form speaks from his position in the sun, not only recalling past joys, but providing the word of knowledge to encourage Los and inform the reader:

> The Reactor hath hid himself thro envy. I behold him.
> But you cannot behold him till he be reveald in his System
> Albions Reactor must have a Place prepard: Albion must Sleep
> The Sleep of Death, till the Man of Sin & Repentance be reveald.[1]

Proclaiming Albion's coming salvation from his captivity to delusion, the Saviour reveals that Albion's Spectre, Satan, is a reactor rather than an actor, in that all he does is to mimic and pervert what he sees the Saviour doing, and is merely a shadow who will be rejected when revealed in his true form.

[1] ibid., 43. 9--12.

The "two Immortal forms" who escape from the interiors of Albion have a function similar to their counterparts in the Book of Job, the four messengers who come one by one to recount the calamities that have befallen Job, all ending with the words, "and I only am escaped to tell thee." [1] So too the immortal forms escape to recount the terrible things that have taken place in the land of Albion, who is still accompanied by the deluding Vala, and has come to the folly of the idolatry of worshipping his own shadow:

> Albion fell upon his face prostrate before the watry Shadow
> Saying O Lord whence is this change! thou knowest I am nothing! [2]

The result of this idolatry is, as we have already seen, that Albion continues to appear as a Job figure who brings upon himself his afflictions. The self-deluding vision which is the creation of his own "wearied intellect" soon becomes a cloud from which Luvah appears and smites Albion with boils. Albion's retaliatory narrowing of Luvah's senses is again self-defeating, and leads only to the havoc which Luvah and Vala cause together, destroying the innocence of the human heart:

> ..... the Spirits Luvah & Vala
> Went down the Human Heart where Paradise & its joys abounded,

[1] Job 1. 15, 16, 17, 19.
[2] Jerusalem 43. 41--42.

In jealous fears & fury & rage, & flames roll round their fervid feet: [1]

The design on Plate 44 shows the "two Immortal forms" escaping to Los, representatives of humanity fleeing from the turmoil and carnage they have found in the interiors of Albion. Blake, on this plate, names them as Los's Emanation and Spectre, who, reunited with Los, learn the forgiveness which Blake's experience of the relationship between the artist and his patron teaches him to exercise:

Being not irritated by insult bearing insulting benevolences
They perceived that corporeal friends are spiritual enemies [2]

Los, in response to the reports which his emanation and spectre bring, laments the evils which have taken root in Albion's land, both direct and open on the one hand, and concealed and disguised as goodness on the other:

They mock at the Labourers limbs! they mock at his starvd Children!
They buy his Daughters that they may have power to sell his Sons:
They compell the Poor to live upon a crust of bread by soft mild arts:
They reduce the Man to want: then give with pomp & ceremony. [3]

Los is hampered, however, by Albion's attempt to enclose him in "Feminine Allegories"; a state in which, as

[1] ibid., 43. 73--75.

[2] ibid., 44. 9--10.

[3] ibid., 44. 28--31.

Stevenson suggests, Los's "imaginative creations, and the purpose in life of their creator, are hedged about with false notions of the purpose of poetry and art, which weaken its prophetic impact." [1] Los laments too the dominance of self-love taking the form of sex, for "Humanity knows not of Sex" in the sense of the setting of persons over against one another, in contrast to the truly sexual unity of Eden in open commingling. Blake continually uses the imagery of the tabernacle to signify the secrecy inherent in sex in Beulah, and is, as Stevenson points out, "impressed by the powerful sense of restriction and compulsion in the ritual, and blends it with the sense of restriction and compulsive necessity in sex."[2]

The action of Plate 45 is, as Erdman and Bloom have pointed out, central to Jerusalem, presenting Blake's imaginative depiction of what London in particular, and human society in general, has become, and revealing the progress Los has made towards an appreciation of the function of pity and forgiveness in the work of the artist. It continues too the theme of female domination which was emphasized on Plate 44, only with greater intensity of feeling, as we see Vala possessively claiming her right to power over Albion, for:

[1] Stevenson, op.cit., p. 716.

[2] ibid., p. 717.

..... Was it not said of old
Set your Son before a man & he shall take you & your sons
For slaves: but set your Daughter before a man & She
Shall make him & his sons & daughters your slaves for ever! [1]

Jerusalem refuses to possess Albion in the sense of becoming his wife, for she has learnt from her own suffering inflicted by Vala's possessiveness, as shown in the design on this plate, where she is seen bound fast by Vala's "iron threads of Love & jealousy & despair."

At the beginning of the plate, Los courageously sets out to explore the interiors from which his emanation and spectre have so recently escaped, entering "in all the terrors of friendship" rather than merely offering "insulting benevolences". He finds everywhere the evidence of what Bloom calls a "reductive and generalizing tyranny at work," [2] until uniquely personal souls are turned into numberless identical units of slavery:

..... there they take up
The articulations of a mans soul, and laughing throw it down
Into the frame, then knock it out upon the plank, & souls are bak'd
In bricks to build the pyramids of Heber & Terah. [3]

[1] Jerusalem 45. 51--54.

[2] Erdman p. 854.

[3] Jerusalem 45. 9--12.

The dehumanization is so complete that Los is left "enquiring in vain / Of stones and rocks . . . for human form was none". At this point in the poem, Los has moved far towards the goal of pity replacing wrath which was set before him, and he recognizes that any bitterness over the situation he finds in Albion's interiors would of necessity be self-defeating, for bitterness is vengeance and vengeance is ultimately the only sin. Anything other than pity is precluded from his attitude, for:

> If I should dare to lay my finger on a grain of sand
> In way of vengeance; I punish the already punishd: O whom
> Should I pity if I pity not the sinner who is gone astray! [1]

Plate 46 is very much a plate of contrasts. The design which occupies most of it presents the choice which faces Albion, and in its powerful affirmation of the way of truth and beauty and energy, in the figures of Jerusalem and the children, from whom arise the Gothic churches of art, in contrast to the veiled figure of Vala standing above the dome of St. Paul's, it presents a strong counter movement to the text.

Albion is depicted as a Samson figure, deprived of his strength and taken prisoner and mocked by the Philistines:

[1] ibid., 45. 33--35.

..... pale stood Albion at his eastern gate,
Leaning against the pillars, & his disease rose from his skirts. [1]

His sons are the Philistines who mock his lack of strength, providing for him "a golden couch", a parody of the chariot of Ezekiel's vision:

And on the Couch reposd his limbs, trembling from the bloody field. [2]

From this reclining giant figure, a shadow of his former strength, tears forth, on Plate 47, the demonically energetic figure of Luvah, proceeding from Albion's loins with all the force of repressed and perverted sexuality, "in rivers / Of blood over Europe". Ironically, his work is animating in the worst sense, in contrast to Albion's enforced and trembling repose, and he pours out on Europe the utmost destruction and cruelty. However Blake will not allow us to forget the principle at work whereby all those who take vengeance inflict the punishment upon themselves, and Luvah's cruelty is similarly self-defeating, for:

..... the Punisher
Mingles with his Victims Spectre, enslaved and tormented
To him whom he has murderd, bound in vengeance and enmity [3]

[1] ibid., 45. 70 -- 46. 1.

[2] ibid., 46. 13.

[3] ibid., 47. 14--16.

The sense of hopelessness to which Albion has arrived, as his last words, "Hope is banish'd from me", reveal, is overwhelmingly the image of the design on Plate 47, which shows Albion suffering the turmoil of his having turned away from the Divine Vision, with Jerusalem and Vala, in her unfallen form, howling in pain as they share Albion's afflictions. However even at this moment, the Saviour, who is present in his pity to receive the dying Albion at the beginning of Plate 48, insists on our seeing the reality and not the appearance, the "Eternal Individuality" of Albion rather than the dying giant, deprived of strength and hope. The Saviour undoes the mockery of the Sons of Albion, replacing their golden couch with a truly sublime creation on which Albion is to rest until the day of resurrection, a couch which is in fact the Bible, as approved by the New Church Conference in 1789:

> In silence the Divine Lord builded with immortal labour,
> Of gold & jewels a sublime Ornament, a Couch of repose,
> With Sixteen pillars: canopied with emblems & written verse. [1]

Jerusalem is driven to action from her repose in Beulah, where she was taken for her protection on Plate 37, by a "Maternal Love" which is strong enough to drive her "With solemn mourning out of Beulah's moony shades and hills", but which is not strong enough to sustain her in

[1] ibid., 48. 5--7.

her sorrow and stress, with the result that eventually she attempts to escape from association with Albion, her male counterpart, "struggling to put off the Human form / Writhing in pain." Once again the Daughters of Albion receive her in her act of suicide, and take her to their protection.

As a counterpart to the Saviour's action in preparing a couch for the dying Albion, the emanations of Albion's friends "Concenter in one Female form an Aged pensive Woman" who, like the Saviour, is "occupied in labours / Of sublime mercy". Her work is to materialize time and space into a saving form, by drawing out the moment of time through the tears and suffering of human history, shaping it into something of beauty, the rainbow of promise:

> ..... With awful hands she took
> A Moment of Time, drawing it out with many tears
> & afflictions
> And many sorrows: oblique across the Atlantic
> Vale
> Which is the Vale of Rephaim dreadful from East
> to West,
> Where the Human Harvest waves abundant in the beams
> of Eden
> Into a Rainbow of jewels and gold, a mild Reflection
> from
> Albions dread Tomb. Eight thousand and five hundred
> years
> In its extension. Every two hundred years has a door
> to Eden [1]

[1] ibid., 48. 30--37.

The lament of Erin which concludes the second chapter has the function, first of all, of bringing together and explicating the various directions in which Albion's flight from the Divine Vision has taken him. Taking the imagery of the Old Testament which pervades this chapter, "To the Jews", Erin recounts the significance of the loss of Eden:

> The golden Gate of Havilah and all the Garden of God
> Was caught up with the Sun in one day of fury and war,
> The Lungs, the Heart, the Liver, shrunk away far distant from Man
> And left a little slimy substance floating upon the tides. [1]

It is "by reason of narrowed perceptions" that man has lost his awareness of his own significance, stubbornly refusing to expand his limited senses, "shut in narrow doleful form! / Creeping in reptile flesh upon the bosom of the ground!" Erin's appeal to Jerusalem is backed up with the call for the expelling of evil to make a space for her to return, but her call is not an ineffective one, like the call of the cities earlier. She herself represents the hope she holds out in the building of "the Body / Of Divine Analogy". It is the task of the artist to reveal that the natural man, so-called, is in fact merely an analogy of the true man, as we saw earlier in the Saviour's recognition of the "Eternal Individuality" of Albion even at his moment of death.

[1] ibid., 49. 15--18.

The giving of definite form to the Satanic analogy is basic to the work of time in Jerusalem, as we have seen, and is preparatory to the revealing to all of the divine reality. This work of revealing the human form in history, the work of the "Aged pensive Woman", is to be seen in the context of the reality of time's destructive cruelties, as they are represented in the design on Plate 50 of the poem in which the world is seen as a little island besieged by all the evil powers of nature, "A Creation that groans, living on Death, / Where Fish & Bird & Beast & Man & Tree & Metal & Stone / Live by Devouring, going into Eternal Death continually".

Just as the first chapter ended with the call by the Regions of Beulah to the Lamb of God to deliver individuals by the creation of states, a call answered on Plate 31. 13--16, so Chapter Two ends with a similar call by the Daughters of Beulah to the Lamb to "take away the remembrance of Sin", the crippling self-condemnation and guilt which has constantly prevented Albion from acting upon his lucid moments of insight into the reality of his situation.

3. Chapter Three.

Dominating the third chapter of Jerusalem is Rahab, the symbolic figure in whom all the forces of evil are drawn together into one. However, before examining the consolidation of evil in this chapter, it is important to understand the function of the frontispiece, Plate 51, in the structure of the poem. It shows, as Wicksteed writes, "the Nadir of Creation, the dark and cavernous chamber underlying the materialist's Universe",[1] with its three despairing figures; Vala, ironically seated as queen of this realm of death on her throne of stone; Hyle, the image of materialistic blindness, and Scofield, the image of hopelessness. In her essay, "The Human Form Divine", Anne K. Mellor is no doubt right to point out that this plate "exposes the unholy trinity of the Deist faith",[2] but she misses the main point of the plate. It is not so much the unholiness of the three figures which is depicted, as the fact that they are pitiable, and the design is a vital part of the structure of the poem in expressing the despair of their situation as Los must see it if he is to succeed in his own struggle to "abstain from wrath" and unite Albion through pity.

Michael Phillips has pointed out that the recently dis-

[1] Wicksteed, op.cit., p. 205.

[2] Studies in English Literature, 11 (Autumn 1971), 595--620, p. 606.

covered original pencil drawing for this plate would add weight to this reading, in that the original drawing shows a fourth figure, fierce and crouching, on the left, whom Blake may well have excluded because of the need to show figures expressing the pitiable nature of despair. It is clear from the paper that Blake has experimented with the drawing by folding it, before deciding whether to exclude the fierce figure on the left or the despairing Scofield on the right.

At the root of Blake's indictment of Deism, in the third prose preface of Jerusalem on Plate 52, is his insistence that the individual must be seen apart from the state in which he may be at any given moment. The state of Rahab which must be put off is a state of Deistic folly, characterized by the twin enemies of natural morality and natural philosophy, which teach that "Man is Righteous in his Vegetated Spectre". Natural morality is the religion of Satan, the marks of which are the taking of vengeance for sin, and the waging of war in the name of God. In summing up these elements of Deism, Blake castigates self-righteousness as being just as great, if not a greater evil than the destructive power of self-condemnation, which latter continually robs Albion of his resources for positive action:

Deism, is the Worship of the God of this World by the means of what you call Natural Religion and Natural Philosophy,

and of Natural Morality or Self-Righteousness, the Selfish Virtues of the Natural Heart. This was the Religion of the Pharisees who murderd Jesus

It is their freedom from such self-righteous hypocrisy which absolves both Monk and Methodist from Blake's scorn, and their gospel of forgiveness which unites them in the religion of Jesus. The stanzas which conclude the preface show that real power resides not in the weapons of corporeal warfare, but in the only forces which can redeem Albion, the power of pity and forgiveness:

> For a Tear is an Intellectual thing;
> And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King
> And the bitter groan of a Martyrs woe
> Is an Arrow from the Almighties Bow!

This note of pity continues into Plate 53, where we find Los weeping over what has become of Albion:

> But Los, who is the Vehicular Form of strong Urthona
> Wept vehemently over Albion where Thames currents spring
> From the rivers of Beulah; pleasant river! soft, mild, parent stream [1]

At the same time, Los is described later on the same plate as building Golgonooza in fears, rage and fury. These are not to be confused with the wrath that must be put off, but are necessary human reactions to the situation he sees around him, and are the raw material from which Golgonooza, the "building of pity and compassion", is

[1] Jerusalem 53. 1--3.

shaped. In the description of the building of Golgonooza on this plate, we are given the most direct identification of Los's city with Golgotha, or Calvary, that the poem has so far permitted:

> Here on the banks of the Thames, Los builded Golgonooza.
> Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart, beneath Beulah
> In the midst of the rocks of the Altars of Albion.[1]

Like Golgotha, Golgonooza is both geographically "Outside of the Gates", and "in the midst of the rocks" of sacrifice, and metaphorically beyond the reach of the human heart. It is the place of Los's self-sacrifice, a place where nothing is static, but all is "continually building & continually decaying desolate!"

In contrast to this place of positive action is the design on Plate 53, which depicts the female figure of Vala, still crowned as on Plate 51, representing melancholy, and seated on a sun-flower, with its false and seductive appearance of beauty. Wicksteed aptly points us to Blake's earlier description of the appearance of the Vegetative Universe in the first chapter of the poem:[2]

> The Vegetative Universe, opens like a flower from the Earths center:

[1] ibid., 53. 15--17.

[2] Wicksteed, op.cit., p. 207.

In which is Eternity. It expands in Stars to the Mundane Shell [1]

Plate 54 is in many ways an explanatory plate, beginning with the description of Jerusalem, and contrasting the fate of Albion. Jerusalem is a shining forth from eternity in man, taking the form of mutual forgiveness, and "called Liberty among the Children of Albion", to whom mutual forgiveness is incomprehensible. Albion, on the other hand, is no shining forth of eternity, but "a Rocky fragment from Eternity hurld / By his own Spectre". As Stevenson points out, the fact that Albion is being supported in the arms of the Saviour, who reposes "The pale limbs of his Eternal Individuality / Upon the Rock of Ages", [2] is a simultaneous view of the same thing from a different angle, from the view of faith. [3] Albion's fall from eternity "Into his own Chaos", reveals itself in the hatred and thirst for vengeance which is directed towards his sons, and which is the same as that sexual love which seeks to bind the other in "iron chains".

The design which intersects Plate 54 gives a different form to the same contraries described on Plate 3 as the sheep and the goats. Here what Stevenson rightly

1 Jerusalem 13. 34--35.

2 ibid., 48. 1--4.

3 Stevenson, op.cit., p. 737.

calls "the unreconciled opposites which divide this world",[1] or what we might call the divided and hostile Zoas, take the form of Reason and Desire, and Wrath and Pity. The same division, leading to hostility and despair, is depicted in the design at the foot of the page, in the four faces of the helpless and disunited Zoas. However the plate ends with the reminder of the constant presence of the Divine Vision, who "dimly appeared in clouds of blood weeping."

Before this we see the Spectre rising over Albion as a parody of the Holy Spirit, "like a hoar frost & a Mildew". He is in fact Satan, for he calls on Albion to:

> Come hither into the Desart & turn these stones to bread.
> Vain foolish Man! wilt thou believe without Experiment? [2]

Blake calls him Arthur, associating ideas of power, kingship and war, and aptly incorporating in the Spectre's use of language the continual play on the stock response. In ll. 17, 19 and 24, he seeks from Albion the stock response to such things as humility, power and lust.

The poetic range of Plate 55 reveals it to be one of the most diverse and at the same time one of the most

[1] ibid., p. 737.

[2] Jerusalem 54. 21--22.

complete plates in itself, in Jerusalem. The plate begins with quiet debate among the Eternals, but soon builds up to the raging of the "Universal Conclave", with "such thunderous sounds as never / Were sounded from a mortal cloud", which in ll. 34--46 is transformed into the beauty and serenity which characterizes their unity, only to give way again to a climactic speech in ll. 56--66, moving this time from quietness to loudness and volume in their harangue against the "Reasoners of Albion".

Shocked at Albion's situation, the Eternals, at the beginning of the plate, gather themselves together into an Assembly, the Divine Analogy of which the political assembly instituted through the French Revolution was an image, and find themselves divided into those who favour intervention and those who favour separation. This myth may be interpretated on several planes, ranging from the political and historical to the aesthetic, and it is from the aesthetic point of view, as a debate about the function of art, that I understand its application at this point in the poem. The Eternals are imaginative beings who must decide how to make the best use of their imaginative gifts. They are divided into those who desire involvement in and commitment to the unpleasant realities of the contemporary situation, on the one hand, and on the other, those who see the greatest fulfilment of their creativeness in the directing of their energies to explor-

ing the unity which they have found through the work of Jesus:

> Forbidding us that Veil which Satan puts between
> Eve & Adam
> By which the Princes of the Dead enslave their
> Votaries
> Teaching them to form the Serpent of precious
> stones & gold
> To seize the Sons of Jerusalem & plant them in
> One Mans Loins
> To make One Family of Contraries: that Joseph
> may be sold
> Into Egypt: for Negation; a Veil the Saviour born
> & dying rends. [1]

This is the veil of sex (l.11), of power (l.12), of conformity (l.15), and of slavery (ll.15--16), all coming together to separate persons from one another, which the Saviour in his setting up of the new kingdom or community, has torn down.

Blake's language becomes Miltonic again as he describes the thunderous contentions of the Eternals in their fierce desire to rescue Jerusalem and Albion, Shiloh, the Emanation of France, and Vala. They elect the "Seven Eyes of God" to take control of the happenings on earth and to limit the harm that men can do to one another. Their unity in electing is marked by the speech I have already referred to, characterized by the beauty of confidence and serenity, in which they show their mature understanding of life, accepting yet transcending the reality of mundane experience, affirming their faith in the capacity of

[1] ibid., 55. 11--16.

humanity to see things whole, and revealing a truly creative reconciliation of contraries:

> But first they said: (& their Words stood in Chariots in array
> Curbing their Tygers with golden bits & bridles of silver & ivory)
> Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity
> At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods
> And then behold! what are these Ulro Visions of Chastity
> Then as the moss upon the tree: or dust upon the plow:
> Or as the sweat upon the labouring shoulder: or as the chaff
> Of the wheat-floor or as the dregs of the sweet wine-press
> Such are these Ulro Visions [1]

After reaffirming their oneness, "Silence remained & every one resumed his Human Majesty", and we have a return to the poetry of direct statement and of proposition which began the plate, in which the Eternals encourage one another to realize their potential.

It is not long, however, before we hear the Living Creatures leading us back from the light of eternity to the terrible realities of the land of Albion, as they cry out in their rage against the "generalizing Demonstrations of the Rational Power" which destroy art and science by murdering the minute particulars, for "The Infinite alone resides in Definite & Determinate Identity".

[1] ibid., 55. 34--42.

The cries of the Living Creatures find their echo in the working song of Los which begins Plate 56, and which continues their angry lament, deploring the power of woman over man "from Cradle to corruptible Grave". Much of Los's song can only be understood as a taunt to the Daughters of Albion. Using the suggestions of dependence and helplessness linked with the cradle, he accuses the Daughters of Albion of turning the world into a cradle, which they, as female forms, rock as they will, keeping man helpless. Los then turns the image against them, warning that just as they have caused the cradle to be "Rock'd by Year, Month, Day & Hour", he will measure out with his hammer "Days & Nights & Years & Months" and take over the governance of the world, answering the call of "the Great Voice of Eternity" on Plate 55, "Who will go forth for us! & Who shall we send before our face?" The Daughters, in response, can see no further than the world of mortality, and this provokes Los to further taunts, with what Bloom perceptively sees as "a mocking imitation of their feminine speech rhythms",[1] and increasing bitterness at Albion's creation of a "Female Will".

On Plate 55, the work of the Living Creatures in bringing distinct outline and form to the indefinite generalizations of the reasoners of Albion was described

[1] Erdman, pp. 855--56.

as the work of their "golden Plow". On Plate 57 it is Albion who now directs the plow, bringing pouring in upon the cities the flood of chaos of "the deep black rethundering Waters / Of the Atlantic", as he tries to plough up the nations in a mad rush to gain power for himself. His usurpation of the work of the Living Creatures is doubly defeating however, for it provokes the cities to the wisdom of their bitterly rhetorical truisms in which they see the folly and the cruelty to which disunity leads, perceiving that "Brotherhood is Religion". At the same time Albion's attempt to use the plow for his own purposes, to achieve power for himself, results in his being overthrown and plowed in with the dead, only his Spectre remaining alive:

> But Albion fled from the Divine Vision, with the Plow of Nations enflaming
> The Living Creatures maddend and Albion fell into the Furrow, and
> The Plow went over him & the Living was Plowed in among the Dead
> But his Spectre rose over the starry Plow. [1]

This retrospective view of Albion's folly brings us again to where we saw Albion laid by the Saviour to await the resurrection "Upon the Rock of Ages" on Plate 48, for Albion now flees until "he came to the Rock of Ages. & he took his Seat upon the Rock".

In the design to Plate 57, outside the globe in which

[1] Jerusalem 57. 12--15.

the text is enclosed we see the spiritual forms of two of the friends of Albion, York and London, and below, Jerusalem, whose right foot touches and perhaps assists in turning the globe around. She remains asleep however, under the protection of the Daughters of Beulah, but still separated from Albion.

Plate 58 turns our attention again to the Daughters of Albion, in whose cruelty and debauchery Blake sees a repetition of the rejoicing of the women of Israel over David's slaying of the Philistine, when, on his return with Saul, "the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick": [1]

> Naked & drunk with blood, Gwendolen dancing to the timbrel
> Of War, reeling up the Street of London she divides in twain
> Among the Inhabitants of Albion. the People fall around. [2]

The dividing of the Daughters of Albion results in Druidic cruelties; their uniting, in "Hermaphroditic Condensations". Out of this "World of Death" Los works to create a "World of Generation", the first step in the restoration of a human form to the world. These two worlds of generation and of death are depicted in the design on Plate 58. The upper illustration shows, in

[1] 1 Samuel 18. 6.

[2] Jerusalem 58. 2--4.

Wicksteed's words, "the entrance into Generation, conceived with Satanic bat-wings, and leading in the lower design to the flaming tomb of Mortality".[1]

The description of Los's work which follows has caused problems because of the apparent association of Los and Urizen in the building. However the text makes it clear that the World of Generation, which Los creates out of the World of Death, peopled with the Daughters of Albion, is at the same time "the Ancient World of Urizen, in the Satanic Void", being merely the first step in Los's saving work. So at one and the same time Urizen directs the building "wrathful", while Los carries out the same work in pity. The building is likened to the temple of Ezekiel's vision, from which flowed the waters of life, bringing healing wherever they went:[2]

> Urizen wrathful strode above directing the awful Building:
> As a Mighty Temple; delivering Form out of confusion
> Jordan sprang beneath its threshold bubbling from beneath
> Its pillars: Euphrates ran under its arches:[3]

The whole world is material for Los's hammer and forge, as he turns each minute particular away from "The Hermaphroditic Satanic World of rocky destiny" towards "A World

[1] Wicksteed, op.cit., p. 212.

[2] Ezekiel 47. 1--9.

[3] Jerusalem 58. 21--24.

of Generation continually Creating".

The motivation behind Los's actions is made clear on Plate 59, where his work is shown as the transforming of "The Habitation of the Spectres of the Dead" into "the Place / Of Redemption & of awaking again into Eternity". This is done by taking whatever is Satanic and turning it to usefulness, as with the "Veil of Vala", the net of moral virtue, which:

> ..... began to Vegetate & Petrify
> Around the Earth of Albion. among the Roots of his Tree
> This Los formed into the Gates & mighty Wall, between the Oak
> Of Weeping & the Palm of Suffering beneath Albions Tomb.
> Thus in process of time it became the beautiful Mundane Shell [1]

Thus in the midst of the chaos caused by the disunity of the Zoas "Is built eternally the sublime Universe of Los & Enitharmon".

The description of the work of the Daughters of Los at their spinning which occupies the rest of Plate 59, is very likely, as Stevenson suggests, "drawn from what Blake had seen in the sweated labour of girls' charity schools in Lambeth",[2] and as such is a powerful indictment of the conditions of their life, but it is also

[1] ibid., 59. 3--7.

[2] Stevenson, op.cit., pp. 749--50.

undoubtedly an expression of the motivating force behind his own poetic activity. The work of spinning is a work of willing self-sacrifice and of creativity. The allusion to "Goats-hair & Purple & Scarlet & fine twined Linen" is, as Stevenson suggests, to the spontaneous and sacrificial giving and the skilled creativeness of the women who spun for the furnishing of the tabernacle in Exodus 35. 25--26. [1] At the same time it is a "most grievous work of pity and compassion". They labour "with bitter food. void of sleep":

> Yet the intoxicating delight that they take in their work
> Obliterates every other evil; none pities their tears
> Yet they regard not pity & they expect no one to pity
> For they labour for life and love, regardless of any one
> But the poor Spectres that they work for, always incessantly
> They are mockd, by every one that passes by, they regard not
> They labour; & when their Wheels are broken by scorn & malice
> They mend them sorrowing with many tears & afflictions. [2]

Plate 60 returns to the struggle of contraries, as we see Los watching terrified as Luvah continues to spread out over Europe and Asia "in bloody veins in torments", terrifying to Los because Luvah and the Spectre of Albion have now become one in ordinary mankind. At the same time the Shepherd who is the Divine Vision continues his saving work, gathering Jerusalem's children in his arms

[1] ibid., p. 750.

[2] Jerusalem 59. 34--41.

for their protection. The Divine Vision sees that the time is right to confront Jerusalem in her despair, and in a pleading which draws upon the pleas of many prophets, and particularly of Jesus himself in Matthew 23. 37--38, combines lament with warning and remembrance with promise. The main source, however, for this confrontation with Jerusalem, is Ezekiel's lament over the fall of the Prince of Tyre. Just as Tyre was at one time "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty . . . in Eden the garden of God",[1] so the Divine Vision reminds Jerusalem of her former position:

> I gave thee Priam's City and the Isles of Grecia lovely,
> I gave thee Hand & Schofield & the Counties of Albion,
> They spread forth like a lovely root into the Garden of God: [2]

Like Tyre, Jerusalem's apparent intention is to deface her own beauty, but the Divine Vision ends with the promise of a restoration to "liberty and life".

Jerusalem's situation is revealed from a different perspective as the allusion changes from Ezekiel's Prince of Tyre to Jeremiah's fate in the dungeon of Malchiah:

> Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon . . . and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.[3]

[1] Ezekiel 28. 12--13.

[2] Jerusalem 60. 13--15.

[3] Jeremiah 38. 6.

This is Jerusalem's fate as Hand turns his fury against her, forcing her to much worse afflictions than those borne by the Daughters of Los, as she sits at the mill, "her hair unbound her feet naked / Cut with the flints: her tears run down". What began as a confrontation soon has its intended outcome as the love of the Divine Vision draws forth from Jerusalem a similar response, and a perception of the truth:

> . . . but I know thee O lord when thou arisest upon
> My weary eyes even in this dungeon & this iron mill.[1]

On Plate 61 the Divine Vision introduces the story of Mary and Joseph as a comfort for Jerusalem, making the identification of Mary and Jerusalem explicit in a number of ways. Just as Mary suffered, being regarded as "a Harlot & an Adulteress", so too does Jerusalem, being seen as a harlot through the eyes of moral virtue.[2] Mary is introduced as the forerunner of Jerusalem's sufferings:

> Mary leaned her side against Jerusalem, Jerusalem received
> The Infant into her hands in the Visions of Jehovah.[3]

The identification is made complete, however, by Blake's incorporation in his version of the story of both Matthew's

[1] Jerusalem 60. 58--59.

[2] ibid., 18. 11--12.

[3] ibid., 61. 46--47.

record of Joseph's reaction to Mary, when she is found to be with child, and Ezekiel's allegory of Jerusalem as a child, pitied by none but the Lord:

> . . . Am I become lovely as a Virgin in his sight
> who am
> Indeed a Harlot drunken with the Sacrifice of Idols
> does he
> Call her pure as he did in the days of her Infancy
> when She
> Was cast out to the loathing of her person.[1]

Mary does not deny Joseph's charges any more than Jerusalem can deny the charges made against her in Ezekiel's story, for the theme of the story in Ezekiel 16 is the lesson which Joseph learns here, that:

> ..... Jehovah's Salvation
> Is without Money & without Price, in the Continual
> Forgiveness of Sins [2]

She is made "pure thro his Mercy / And Pity" just as Jerusalem was in Ezekiel 16, and just as we are told Jerusalem will be in Blake's poem. [3]

Jerusalem is unable to see the point of the story, however, just as Albion earlier was unable to see beyond his own sin and guilt:

> Jerusalem replied. I am an outcast: Albion is dead!

[1] ibid., 61. 37--40.

[2] ibid., 61. 21--22.

[3] ibid., 60. 36--37.

I am left to the trampling foot & the spurning heel!
A Harlot I am calld. [1]

She lacks faith for the reality of her present situation, just as Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, with whom she is compared, and it is necessary for Jesus to go over the same ground again, spelling out the meaning of the parable as it were, just as he had to do so often in the gospels. Jerusalem, though, is able to understand something of her own significance as the emanation of Albion in seeing that it was the "Maternal Line", twelvefold, opposing the twelve Daughters of Albion, which made the birth of the Saviour possible. Blake's attacks on the "Female Will" are by no means at the expense of a recognition of the significance of the promise in Genesis, as he interprets it, that the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.[2] Woman's position is central in the redemption of mankind.

The terrible work of Luvah, who is now the Spectre of Albion, in extending over the whole world "Tyburns Brook where Victims howl & cry", is represented in the design on Plate 62, showing the agonised victim, probably the giant Albion, his head encircled by a snake. It is a reality which tempts even Los to despair, as he appears at the feet of the giant, a tiny form confronting the

[1] ibid., 62. 2--4.
[2] Genesis 3. 15.

enormity of the situation. There are moments when Los's vision fades and he must work on purely out of persistence:

> ..... Los in despair oft sat, & often pondered
> On Death Eternal in fierce shudders upon the mountains of Albion
> Walking: & in the vales in howlings fierce, then to his Anvils
> Turning, anew began his labours, tho in terrible pains! [1]

In the reference to the slaying of Tharmas by Luvah on Plate 63 Blake directs the attention to the part of Albion and Vala in their taking of revenge on the slayer. Albion appears as "punisher & judge",[2] and his bringing of Luvah to justice is an allusion, according to Erdman's suggestion, to the first English occupation of Paris. "The effect of these allusions", Erdman writes, is "to focus attention on Albion's desire to crucify Luvah as the central issue. The trial and nailing of Luvah to Albion's Tree constitute Albion's 'denying the Resurrection,'" which in turn refers to Albion's denial of "the legitimacy of revolutionary governments."[3] Erdman, in the light of his interpretation of the historical allegory, sees the design on Plate 63 as a depiction of "France shorn again", though on a more general level the female figure bound by the coils of the serpent signifies woman bound by the Druidic demands of chastity:

[1] Jerusalem 62. 39--42.

[2] ibid., 28. 4.

[3] Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, rev. ed., pp. 464--67.

Such the appearance in Cheviot: in the Divisions
of Reuben
When the Cherubim hid their heads under their
wings in deep slumbers
When the Druids demanded Chastity from Woman &
all was lost. [1]

The vengeance which Vala inflicts on Luvah spreads throughout the world in the form of Druidic ritual cruelty:

Till Canaan rolld apart from Albion across the Rhine:
along the Danube
And all the Land of Canaan suspended over the Valley
of Cheviot [2]

The significance of the separation of Canaan from Albion is as an image of the alienation of man from himself, as is borne out in the following lines where Reuben is described fleeing "with his head downwards among the Caverns"; the natural man, not only divided and at war within himself, but fleeing from himself, for "Reuben is Merlin".[3] Blake would have found the same image of alienation, in the separation of man from his geographical home, in the Book of Ezekiel, where Ezekiel's prophecy to the mountains of Israel, promising them a time when they will be peopled again, is an expression not only of the people of Israel's exile from their land, but also of their separation from their true selves, their inner alienation. [4]

[1] Jerusalem 63. 23--25.

[2] ibid., 63. 41--42.

[3] ibid., 32. 41.

[4] Ezekiel 26. 11.

Vala, at her most vindictive, as we have seen her on Plate 63, becomes, on Plate 64, the embodiment of all the Daughters of Albion in their hatred to Los:

> Till she vegetated into a hungry Stomach & a devouring Tongue.
> Her Hand is a Court of Justice, her Feet: two Armies in Battle
> Storms & Pestilence: in her Locks: & in her Loins Earthquake.
> And Fire. & the Ruin of Cities & Nations & Families & Tongues [1]

She is the very incarnation of the web woven by the Daughters of Albion to hide the light of eternity from man, a web that exists both within the mind of man, "the Indefinite Spectre, who is the Rational Power", and also in the universe which he sees outside of himself, "the Earths summits". [2] Los shows a divine restraint and forgiveness in his response to Vala's hysterical claims that he will cause man to become a worm and a shadow compared to the substance of manhood under the domination of woman, urged on to power and to war. The design on Plate 64 shows the figure of the artist, with his scroll open before him, sorely troubled and despondent at the spread of Vala's cruelty, but still radiant, his mind conceiving spiritual forms.

It is very clear at this stage of the poem that there

[1] Jerusalem 64. 8--11.

[2] ibid., 64. 4--5.

is a gradual movement taking place towards the summing up of all the forces of evil in one, just as the powers for good have been as "One Man all the Universal Family; and that One Man / We call Jesus the Christ", since the beginning.[1] This Satanic imitation of the unity of the Divine Family in one man has already been suggested in the assimilation of Luvah with the Spectre of Albion,[2] and is confirmed by the appearance of all the Daughters of Albion in the form of Vala on Plate 64, Vala in her turn bringing the assimilation full circle by being drawn into the bosom of Albion's Spectre, thus uniting Luvah, the Daughters of Albion and herself with the Spectre of Albion in one hermaphroditic form:

> ..... magnificent terrific
> Glittering with precious stones & gold, with Garments of blood & fire.[3]

The outcome of this Satanic assimilation is inevitably self-defeating, in that the forces of evil themselves become the victims of their torture. Desiring two imposed worlds of an elect to mercy and a non-elect to punishment, in place of the distinction between the sheep and the goats, Ragan and Gwendolen sentence Luvah, as France, to die nailed "to Albions Tree". The intoxicating madness of such delight in cruelty has its self-defeating outcome as "they become like what they behold",

[1] ibid., 34. 19--20.
[2] ibid., 60. 2.
[3] ibid., 64. 25--26.

and suffer themselves the deadly pain which they inflict upon Luvah:

> Spasms smite their features, sinews & limbs: pale they look on one another.
> They turn, contorted: their iron necks bend unwilling towards
> Luvah: their lips tremble: their muscular fibres are crampd & smitten [1]

It is clear, as the chain which runs down the side of Plate 65 emphasizes, that the greater the assimilation of the enemies of Albion, the greater their physical and mental bondage to one another, the more they suffer at the hands of each other, and the more distinct and undisguised becomes that which must be cast off for a return to a true humanity to be realized.

Blake's introduction of new characters at this point, in the Sons of Urizen, has often puzzled commentators, but it seems to be purely to increase this sense of growing assimilation, that Blake includes them here. They are encouraged to join in the cruel work of forging weapons for warfare, destroying all that is associated with innocence, "blind to all the simple rules of life", part of their armoury being the increasingly sophisticated mechanization of daily work:

> ..... that they might spend the days of wisdom

[1] ibid., 65. 76--78.

> In sorrowful drudgery, to obtain a scanty pittance of bread [1]

Their address to Vala as goddess of war is their own version of Lamech's Sword-song in Genesis 4: [2]

> Now smile among thy bitter tears: now put on all thy beauty
> Is not the wound of the sword sweet! & the broken bone delightful? [3]

It is a song in praise of cruelty, for the Sons of Urizen, in their turn, have been assimilated into the Spectre, and become "the Spectre Sons of Albion", demonstrating again that whatever is spectrous can only live by devouring, by "what he imbibes from deceiving / A Victim!"

In opposition to Golgonooza the Sons of Albion build Stonehenge as a tribute to the pomp of power, "a wondrous rocky World of cruel destiny" in the centre of which is the tabernacle of Vala, the goddess of this realm, her tabernacle being feminine, its materials, "Bacon, Newton & Locke". Within the tabernacle's Holy of Holies is Vala's equivalent of the mercy-seat, her "Cove & Stone of Torture", with the cherubim who spread their wings above the stone, Voltaire and Rousseau, champions of natural religion and representatives of France's betrayal of her own revolution as they watch

[1] ibid., 65. 25--26.

[2] Genesis 4. 23--24.

[3] Jerusalem 65. 30--31.

approvingly the crucifixion of Luvah, who is France. In the terrible description which follows, of the sadistic pleasures of the Daughters of Albion in torturing their victims, the effect of the bringing together of imagery from many sources, including Druidic sacrifice, the crucifixion, the flood, and various Old Testament wars, is to suggest that as the Daughters of Albion tear to pieces their victim, so at the same time they tear up the divine ordering of history, for every ritual sacrifice and every cruelty brings about, in Bloom's words, "a further derangement of the natural world." [1] The inevitable effect of their sadism is to turn every Reuben who beholds it into a Hand:

> As the Senses of Men shrink together under the Knife of flint,
> In the hands of Albions Daughters, among the Druid Temples. [2]

The reference to the rivers and mountains of Albion's land, as they suffer together with Luvah, reminds us that all this stems from the selfish possessiveness of Albion at the beginning of the poem:

> My mountains are my own, and I will keep them to myself [3]

underlining the assumption of community in the poem, that no identity can be affirmed in isolation, and no progress

[1] Erdman, p. 857.

[2] Jerusalem 66. 83--84.

[3] ibid., 4. 29.

achieved by possessiveness, but only by unity.

Plate 67 reminds us that all these cruelties are motivated by female domination, as we see the twelve Daughters of Albion unite into "A Double Female", Rahab and Tirzah, who spread the great polypus of war and imperial power over the whole world. This plate adds a new perspective to our evaluation of these feminine-inspired acts of destruction, for they can be motivated by the mistaken belief that they are necessary and even good in themselves, as Tirzah's plea to Albion reveals:

> O thou poor Human Form! she said. O thou poor child of woe!
> Why wilt thou wander away from Tirzah: why me compel to bind thee? [1]

The design on this plate depicts this victim of female love, chained hand and foot by a love which is blind to its own cruelty:

> Shriek not so my only love! I refuse thy joys: I drink
> Thy shrieks because Hand & Hyle are cruel & obdurate to me [2]

Plate 68 carries on the same theme, with Tirzah's protest that "Unless my beloved is bound upon the Stems of Vegetation", mercy and truth will flee from Shechem,

[1] ibid., 67. 44--45.

[2] ibid., 67. 61--62.

the place of vision,[1] and from Mount Gilead, the place of promise,[2] a perverted view of the necessity of punishment and suffering for reformation. The song of the warriors, which occupies the rest of the plate, gives full expression to Blake's concept of war as a sexual perversion. War is seen as both a substitute form of sexual satisfaction, and as a means of winning the admiration and compliance of the cruel Daughters of Albion. These women "frown & delight in cruelty, refusing all other joy", so the warrior must turn instead to cruelty for his gratification, to "human blood" which becomes his "life / And delightful food".

The spectrous imitation of the unity of mankind in the One Man who is Jesus, is continued on Plate 69, where "all the Males conjoined into One Male", forming a polypus of "Roots of Reasoning, Doubt, Despair & Death". The difference between the reality of the unity of the "One Man", and the unity of the "One Male", reveals how much the Satanic imitation is in shadow only, and not in substance:

> Envying stood the enormous Form, at variance with Itself
> In all its Members, in eternal torment of love & jealousy [3]

[1] Genesis 12. 6--7.

[2] Deuteronomy 34. 1.

[3] Jerusalem 69. 6--7.

The uniting of the males with the Daughters of Albion, pictured in the design on Plate 69 dancing around their suffering victim, is to reproduce, in opposition to the image of God, "the Images of various Species of Contention / And Jealousy & Abhorrence & Revenge & deadly Murder." In contrast Blake provides a guide to a truly self-giving relationship between the male and the female, creating living room for each other, the male giving time and the female space. Such a relationship exists only in the Eden of true humanity, for even Beulah has been drawn into the debasement of life which the Daughters of Albion have brought about, and Beulah's love has become as much commerce as in the world of generation.

Blake's constant use of the tabernacle as an image of sexual relationships, and by extension, of every aspect of earthly society, which reappears on this plate, is drawn from the restriction of law which prevents the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies more than once in the year, and the subsequent freedom from this law which Jesus proclaimed, giving "boldness to enter into the holiest . . . by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh": [1]

[1] Hebrews 10. 19--20.

Hence the Infernal Veil grown in the disobedient
Female:
Which Jesus rends & the whole Druid Law removes
away
From the Inner Sanctuary: A False Holiness hid
within the Center,
For the Sanctuary of Eden. is in the Camp: in
the Outline,
In the Circumference: & every Minute Particular is
Holy [1]

Returning to his theme of the coming together of the Sons of Albion into "One Male", on Plate 70, Blake emphasizes again that it is in outward appearance only that there is any unity, and even then it is monstrous in the form it takes:

. . . Three strong sinewy Necks & Three awful &
Terrible Heads
Three Brains in contradictory council brooding
incessantly. [2]

Stevenson very aptly suggests that the design on this Plate of the huge inhuman trilithon is "a visual image of the massive-shouldered giant Hand".[3] This grotesque three-headed monster, drawing its inspiration from the three editors Hunt of The Examiner, Blake's personal accusers, and obstacles to the social realization of his vision, is revealed to be an amalgam of Bacon, Newton and Locke. The link between these in many ways very diverse figures is said to be the presence within each

[1] Jerusalem 69. 38--42.

[2] ibid., 70. 4--5.

[3] Stevenson, op.cit., p. 779.

of Rahab, the earthly form of Vala, their "Feminine Power unreveal'd", an abstracting philosophy, "Imputing Sin & Righteousness to Individuals". As Harold Bloom suggests, Hand's threefold form identifies him with "the accusers of Job, of Socrates, and of Bunyan's Faithful," [1] though more basically he is of course the Satanic parody of the Trinity.

Plate 71 is an exploration of the States of "the Selfish Center", a hidden and closed realm ruled over by the Sons of Albion, as yet cut off from the Divine Vision whose work is to "open / The Center into an Expanse". The reason for this situation is Albion's own isolation:

> The Starry Heavens all were fled from the mighty limbs of Albion
> And above Albions Land was seen the Heavenly Canaan
> As the Substance is to the Shadow [2]

His alienation is complete, for he has nothing outside of himself with which to affirm himself, the universe having fled him, leaving him indefinite and lacking identity, and at the same time he continues to be at war with himself in his separation from "the Heavenly Canaan". Instead of what is without, "this World of Mortality" being "but a Shadow" to the substance which is within,

[1] Bloom, Blake's Apocalypse, p. 412.

[2] Jerusalem 70. 32 --- 71. 2.

"as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven / And Earth", what is within, "Albion's Land", is shadow to the substance which lies without in "the Heavenly Canaan". What is above is also within, "above" being a metaphor for the heaven man bears within himself, just as Jesus is a metaphor for the imaginative faculties of man.

The cataloging of Albion's land under the Sons of Albion which follows, is an attempt, through the particularization of his vision, to localize it and make it at once more intimate and more forceful. The cities who were formerly the "Friends of the Giant Albion" [1] are now the friends of Hand, for "now Albion is darkened & Jerusalem lies in ruins". At the same time there are still pockets of resistance, watched over by the "Four Sons of Jerusalem", in Ireland, the Universities of Scotland, and Oxford, Cambridge and Winchester, even in the very place where Hyle dwells. The design on this plate, however, shows a female figure, possibly Jerusalem, fallen under the sinister influence of a bat-winged swan, a Son of Albion in the disguise of innocence.

Los cries out in his frustration, unable to act effectively, for he lacks the faith to work on calmly despite appearance, awaiting the time promised by the Divine Vision, and fears to appeal to Albion directly

[1] ibid., 36. 8.

lest Albion should turn his back for ever against the Divine Vision, "& fall over the Precipice of Eternal Death." The reference here seems to be a fear on Blake's part that too direct an attack on contemporary ideas and attitudes might be self-defeating, so that, as Bloom points out, "the outspoken prophecies of America and The Song of Los have been replaced by a sublime allegory not too explicit to the Idiot Questioner rejected by Blake's Milton." [1]

Plate 72 gives us a more detailed description and apportioning of the territory held by "the Four Sons of Jerusalem", setting over against that the image of man as a wandering Reuben, awaiting the return to his home in Jerusalem, when once again she will overspread all the earth, for "The Nations wait for Jerusalem. they look up for the Bride". The same contrast is suggested in the designs on Plate 72 which show the necessity for ceaseless saving work, as the angels weep over the world in which Los must be "Continually building", for it is "Continually Decaying because of Love & Jealousy". This "Love & Jealousy" takes the form of a serpent at the foot of the plate, bearing the words, "Women the comforters of men become the Tormentors & Punishers".

[1] Bloom, op.cit., p. 414.

There is, as Bloom rightly says, a very "gentle irony"[1] in Blake's assignment of the "Gate toward Beulah" to the group of contemplative quietists, mystics and Methodists, "Fenelon, Guion, Teresa, / Whitefield & Hervey", signifying, as Bloom suggests in his commentary to Erdman's edition, "the definite but limited place Blake granted them in the spiritual life." [2]

Still troubled by the same temptation to despair which he faced earlier when he "in despair oft sat",[3] Los continues the terrible labours that are necessary for all artistic creation:

> . . . But how they came forth from the Furnaces & how long
> Vast & severe the anguish eer they knew their Father; were
> Long to tell [4]

This is the continual building that is provoked by the continual decaying of natural life; Los's work of "Dissipating the rocky forms of Death, by his thunderous Hammer" which is depicted in the design on Plate 73, where we see Los hammering at a "hard restricting condensation" built around the sun. Against all the representatives of power and of war which Luvah brings forth, Los creates the originators, the prophets and the poets, deleting

[1] ibid., p. 415.

[2] Erdman, p. 858.

[3] Jerusalem 62. 39.

[4] ibid., 73. 7--9.

non-Biblical figures to make the contrast the more distinct:

> ..... but around
> These, to preserve them from Eternal Death Los
> Creates
> Adam Noah Abraham Moses Samuel David Ezekiel [1]

It is to save the creations of Rahab and Tirzah, from whose number Blake wisely deleted the reference to King George, that Los creates his champions. This is indeed a labour and sacrifice of mercy and pity, for the reductiveness of Luvah's world of condensations, and the divine creativeness of Los as he refashions that world are both suggested in the allusion to Genesis 1.2:

> Where Luvahs World of Opakeness grew to a period: It
> Became a Limit, a Rocky hardness without form & void [2]

Plate 74 provides both a brief summary of the consolidation of the forces of evil which has taken place in the third chapter, described generally as Deistic, and at the same time, a presage of what is to come with the birth of Dinah, the youthful form of Erin. The various aspects of the Spectre's influence are summarised at the beginning of the plate:

> The Spectre is the Reasoning Power in Man; & when
> separated
> From Imagination, and closing itself as in steel,
> in a Ratio

[1] ibid., 73. 39--41.

[2] ibid., 73. 22--23.

> Of the Things of Memory, It thence frames Laws & Moralities
> To destroy Imagination! the Divine Body, by Martyrdoms & Wars [1]

The work of the Sons of Albion, as described in ll. 24--33, is an extension of these principles into the particulars of life, opposing outline in art with light and shade, and imagination with abstractions and cruel laws. Blake's reference to how "Hyle roofd Los in Albions Cliffs" would suggest that in the figure of Hyle Blake has Hayley in mind, and his restrictive influence on Blake's art.

The preoccupation of these plates is with setting the scene for a battle between those forces which Blake associates predominantly with artistic creation, and those who oppose such work with cruelties in any shape or form. To this end the artist is presented here once again as the reshaper of history into a truly human form:

> I walk up and down in Six Thousand Years: their Events are present before me
> To tell how Los in grief & anger, whirling round his Hammer on high
> Drave the Sons & Daughters of Albion from their ancient mountains [2]

The design on Plate 74 shows the struggle of Dinah to emerge into life as another form of the Divine Vision incarnated. Every consolidation of the spectrous must

[1] ibid., 74. 10--13.

[2] ibid., 74. 19--21.

be opposed and overcome by the creation of new forms for the poetic vision to take and carry on its saving work:

> I see a Feminine Form arise from the Four terrible Zoas
> Beautiful but a terrible struggling to take a form of beauty
> Rooted in Shechem: this is Dinah, the youthful form of Erin [1]

Plate 75 fittingly brings us to the nadir of the third chapter of the poem, as Rahab is revealed before us as she really is:

> Mystery Babylon the Great: the Abomination of Desolation
> Religion hid in War: a Dragon red, & hidden Harlot [2]

The plate begins with the revelation of Bath, the healer, become the poisoner, with the parody of the cup of the eucharist in his hand, and leads us into the listing of the "Twenty-seven Heavens & their Churches", the persistence of error throughout human history, only its outer form or name changing, and leading nowhere but to endless cyclic recurrence into the indefinite:

> And where Luther ends Adam begins again in Eternal Circle [3]

[1] ibid., 74. 52--54.

[2] ibid., 75. 19--20.

[3] ibid., 75. 24.

This unveiling of the forces of evil cannot but bring about a total confrontation with the vision of Jesus, who now appears to counteract Rahab's majesty:

> But Jesus breaking thro' the Central Zones of Death & Hell
> Opens Eternity in Time & Space; triumphant in Mercy [1]

This is the confrontation which is expressed in the designs on this last plate of Chapter Three, the confrontation of the eternal chain of love and vision as represented by the series of angels in over-lapping circles, and of the coiled embraces of the serpents who surround Rahab, the "hidden Harlot".

[1] Ibid., 75. 21--22.

4. Chapter Four.

Plate 76, introducing the final chapter of Jerusalem, "To the Christians", reveals the Divine Vision of man in its supreme form, the vision of the Saviour crucified on that most English of trees, the oak, representing the deep enrootedness of error in the soil of Albion's land. Albion, in his vision, mirrors the self-sacrifice of Jesus in his outstretched arms, identifying himself with the Saviour's willing offering of himself for the world. Jesus, on this plate, is the human capacity of Albion, for just as the Saviour, in his suffering, radiates light, so Albion, in his oneness with him, causes the light to break in from the west, from the lands of Erin and America, so that the grandeur of the plate lies in its realization of the Divine Vision in both personal and communal terms.

The central position of the stanza which introduces Plate 77, a plate, as Bloom suggests, "definitive of Blake's Christianity",[1] emphasizes its importance as what might be called Blake's Motto for Chapter Four of Jerusalem, and provides an insight into his poetic intention in the poem:

> I give you the end of a golden string,
> Only wind it into a ball:

[1] Blake's Apocalypse, p. 416.

It will lead you in at Heavens gate,
Built in Jerusalems wall.

By way of contrast, the lines alongside this stanza direct our attention to the persecution of the vision of Jesus which takes place in all forms of false religion. The stanzas which conclude the plate contain a call to England, as persecutor and crucifier of Jesus, to embrace Jerusalem once again. In the Pauline polemical prose passage which precedes this, Blake sets out what this embracing of Jerusalem involves. Jerusalem is "the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination Imagination the real & eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow". To achieve this demands not an abstract but a directed and world-facing search for knowledge, for "to Labour in Knowledge. is to Build up Jerusalem: and to Despise Knowledge, is to Despise Jerusalem & her Builders." Continual building is necessary to offset the continual decaying caused by the devouring and reductive effect of the "Wheel of fire", the wheel on which Lear was bound in his self-imprisonment,[1] and which is a parody of the whirlwind of fire in Ezekiel's vision,[2] the wheel of Natural Religion.

Despite the polemical nature of the preface, it

[1] King Lear, Act. IV, Sc. VII, ll. 46--47.

[2] Ezekiel 1. 4.

concludes with a confidence which prepares for the resolution of the poem, and a reminder that power resides in pity and not in wrath:

> But to the Publicans & Harlots go!
> Teach them True Happiness, but let no curse
> Go forth out of thy mouth to blight their peace
> For Hell is opend to Heaven

This new sense of confidence and of poetic effectiveness is evident at the beginning of Chapter Four. Firstly, the identification of Albion and Jesus in willing self-sacrifice, which was made on Plate 76, is reinforced at the beginning of Plate 78, where Albion is explicitly referred to as a Christ-figure:

> The Spectres of Albions Twelve Sons revolve mightly
> Over the Tomb & over the Body: ravning to devour
> The Sleeping Humanity. [1]

Secondly, there is a new fearless assurance in Los's work as he strikes the Spectres to refashion them, "Dashing in pieces Self-righteousnesses driving them from Albions / Cliffs". While being aware of this, we are not allowed to forget the bitter confrontation which has developed, and which is emphasized as we see the consolidation that is taking place in both camps, as the Sons of Albion begin their siege of Erin:

[1] Jerusalem 78. 1--3.

In terrible armour, raging against the Lamb &
against Jerusalem,
Surrounding them with armies to destroy the
Lamb of God [1]

Jerusalem's despair at this situation is complete, driving her to imitate Job in her lament over her fancied forsakenness and victimization by God.

The image of Jerusalem sitting before Los's furnaces, "clothed in sackcloth of hair", may provide a way into interpreting the design on Plate 78 of the despondent male figure with eagle's beak and cock's comb, sitting before the setting sun. The allusion in l.10 is taken from Revelation 6, where the opening of the sixth seal of the heavenly book reveals "the sun" become "black as sackcloth of hair".[2] Jerusalem is presented as the setting sun in her despair, full of potential but seeing herself as the victim of God, and facing her in the design is the despondent figure of Albion sitting on his rocky cliffs, "The Sleeping Humanity", his eagle's beak signifying his unrealized potential, his cock's comb suggesting that he should be welcoming a rising sun rather than brooding over a setting one.

Jerusalem's lament on Plate 79 shows on the one hand,

[1] ibid., 78. 13--14.

[2] Revelation 6. 12.

the clarity of perception with which she recognizes her past joyful innocence and her present fallen state, but on the other, her complete helplessness in terms of effective action to release herself from her captivity. Instead of the life-giving power which Ezekiel possessed in the Valley of Bones, where he writes that:

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet [1]

Jerusalem is reduced to counting the bones, and to a helpless appeal to Vala:

> . . . I walk & count the bones of my beloveds
> Along the Valley of Destruction, among the Druid Temples
> Which overspread all the Earth in patriarchal pomp & cruel pride
> Tell me O Vala thy purposes [2]

Once he has achieved the tone and poetic form of the Saviour, Los's words take on a similar life-giving power to Ezekiel's, and have their effect on both Albion and Jerusalem, until Albion, like Los, is able to be united fully with Jesus.

Jerusalem's powerlessness is a direct outcome of her having been cast away by Albion's own hills and valleys, until "Albion is himself shrunk to a narrow

[1] Ezekiel 37. 10.

[2] Jerusalem 79. 65--68.

rock in the midst of the sea", for the casting away of spiritual freedom leaves only the sterility of empirical observation. The mingling of the Medway and the Kishon is skilfully handled on this plate, developing from the conviction, underlying the imagery in Jerusalem, that Albion's land is a Holy Land, and as such fully identifiable with Biblical Palestine, for "Thames receivd the heavenly Jordan", and the casting away of Jerusalem from England is the separation of an eternal unity, "Till Albion is shut out from every Nation under Heaven."

The sense of separation is reinforced by the allusion to Psalm 137 in the description of Jerusalem's former work:

> Albion gave me to the whole Earth to walk up & down; to pour
> Joy upon every mountain: to teach songs to the shepherd & plowman
> I taught the ships of the Sea to sing the songs of Zion. [1]

When taken captive from Jerusalem into Babylon, it is required of the people of Israel that they sing for their captives "one of the songs of Zion."[2] Their reply shows the same intensity of feeling which underlies Jerusalem's lament on Plate 79:

> How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?
> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

[1] ibid., 79. 36--38.

[2] Psalm 137. 3.

> If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.[1]

Blake directs our attention to this psalm because this is the past of unity and loyalty which Jerusalem is describing in her lament, and it is in choosing to forget Jerusalem that Albion has become "shrunk to a narrow rock".

Jerusalem's lament takes on the intensity of a Cowperian despair on Plate 80:

> I walk in affliction: I am a worm, and no living soul!
> A worm going to eternal torment! raisd up in a night
> To an eternal night of pain, lost! lost! lost! for ever![2]

Vala's response to this lament in a lament of her own is not quite as unexpected as Bloom suggests,[3] for by this stage it has become clear that there are no victories in evil-doing, but only an increase in self-inflicted pains. Vala's lament is entirely a lament for herself, in response to the self-torment she is suffering. She is aware that its cause lies in her repeated attacks on Albion, for united with Albion's Spectre, she is both punisher and victim, and so she tries to place the blame

[1] ibid., 137. 4--6.

[2] Jerusalem 80. 2--5.

[3] Erdman, p.859.

on Luvah. It is not so much a lament of remorse as a howling:

> ..... upon the winds in pride of beauty
> Lamenting among the timbrels of the Warriors: among the Captives
> In cruel holiness [1]

Her pity is likewise a parody of the real thing, for she revives those whom she slays only to live in her dark possessiveness, "in the secret of our tabernacles", and she cares for the body of Albion by keeping it "embalmd in moral laws / With spices of sweet odours of lovely jealous stupefaction". It is not surprising that such a mass of contradictions should end with the ultimate irony of calling upon the Saviour to pity her by not attempting to revive Albion:

> Pity me then O Lamb of God! O Jesus pity me!
> Come into Luvahs Tents, and seek not to revive the Dead! [2]

In response to Vala's perverted lament, the strong sense of the inevitability of the coming confrontation is reemphasized in the mechanistic turning of the Spindle, weaving, according to Vala's instructions, a body for Jerusalem, "A Dragon form on Zion Hills most ancient promontory", so that Jerusalem and not Vala might be identified

[1] Jerusalem 80. 6--8.

[2] ibid., 80. 30--31.

as the Harlot. Rahab, Vala's earthly form, in order that this may happen, retreats into the indefinite and:

> ..... like a dismal and indefinite hovering Cloud
> Refusd to take a definite form. she hoverd over all the Earth
> Calling the definite, sin: defacing every definite form [1]

The true nature of relationships in the fallen state among the Sons and Daughters of Albion is expressed by Blake in his description of Hand's and Hyle's desire for Cambel and Gwendolen respectively. Hand's desire for Cambel gives her the opportunity to dominate, devour and divide him, "drinking his sighs in sweet intoxication / Drawing out fibre by fibre", possessing him completely. They mock the love of Merlin for it has no cruelty in it, and is not born of fear as earthly love should be. Gwendolen, depicted on Plate 81 explaining her falsehood to the other Daughters of Albion, recognizes the origin of such cruelty called by the name of love, for:

> . . . Men are caught by Love: Woman is caught by Pride [2]

Her moment of greatest triumph is also ironically the moment that ensures her destruction, however, for in exulting that "Humanity is become / A weeping Infant in ruind lovely Jerusalem's folding Cloud", she fails to

[1] ibid., 80. 51--53.

[2] ibid., 81. 6.

see that such an incarnation brings about her own annihilation, for the birth of the Saviour is the herald of the destruction of evil.

The irony of this is extended greatly on Plate 82. Supposing that their "eternal fate", as presaged in the laments of Jerusalem and Vala, can be avoided, the very plan which Gwendolen proposes as a way of escape only makes their doom all the more certain, for she suggests that they extend the process whereby she has formed the mighty Hyle into "a weeping infant", until it embraces all of mankind, thus leaving no possibility of the incarnation being prevented. This irony is doubled through her falsehood concerning the purposes of Los. Seeking to justify her plan to refashion all of humanity into the form of the weeping infant, completely dependent on woman, she tells the other Daughters of a plot by Enitharmon and Los to destroy them, and to leave Albion desolate. In doing this she forgets "that Falsehood is prophetic", that deceit is self-defeating, and it remains only to be revealed to her that in attempting to bind mankind as a weeping infant, it is her own destruction which has been ensured, as Hyle is revealed "a Winding Worm beneath & not a weeping Infant", and the devoured becomes the devourer. Gwendolen's giving birth to the worm is depicted on Plate 80, with Cambel looking on, not with Gwendolen's horror, but in aspiring envy.

Los sees that this situation is his opportunity, and seizes it with great subtelty and shrewdness. Cambel is so intoxicated with the idea of power that she no longer has any capacity to distinguish that which she can control from that which would devour her. Los encourages her to direct her envy into refashioning "the mighty form of Hand according to her will", into the form of a helpless infant, until eventually Gwendolen sees her:

> ..... bearing abroad
> Her struggling torment in her iron arms: and like a chain,
> Binding his wrists & ankles with the iron arms of love. [1]

Turning to Gwendolen, who, at the sight of Cambel's deformed child, bitterly laments her own failure, Los shows her that the winding worm can be transformed into "a form of love by tears & pain" if she will work with him in his furnaces. This appeals to Gwendolen's sisterly jealousy, and she begins "her dolorous task of love". Having thus successfully limited and redirected Cambel's fierce envy, and having positively turned Gwendolen's jealousy into a work serving his own purposes, a work of love and of regeneration, his most successful and brilliant achievement in the poem so far, Los has cause to rejoice in his work:

> I know I am Urthona keeper of the Gates of Heaven,
> And that I can at will expatiate in the Gardens of bliss [2]

[1] ibid., 82. 69--71.

[2] ibid., 82. 81--82.

Almost inevitably Los's rejoicing returns his thoughts to Albion and the corruptibility which has appeared on his limbs, but Los fears that to remain as a watchman over Albion will result in his own assimilation into the way of the world, and cause him to become just as Cambel has formed Hand:

> ..... O Albion! my brother!
> Corruptability appears upon thy limbs, and never more
> Can I arise and leave thy side, but labour here incessant
> Till thy awaking! yet alas I shall forget Eternity!
> Against the Patriarchal pomp and cruelty, labouring incessant
> I shall become an Infant horror. [1]

His speech reveals the tremendous sense of isolation and weariness which afflicts the artist inevitably from time to time. He is like Elijah, faithful in his constancy, but tempted to fear and despair:

> I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant . . . and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.[2]

Los presents himself as an Elijah as he remembers his constant labours in human history:

> ..... and I alas!
> Retain my youth eight thousand and five hundred years.
> The labourer of ages in the Valleys of Despair! [3]

[1] ibid., 83. 1--5.

[2] I Kings 19. 10.

[3] Jerusalem 83. 51--53.

Just as Jerusalem was earlier presented as a sun turned black in her despair, Los now appears as a rising sun, rising on the unjust as well as the just, for it is a forsaken land which he surveys, a land without pity for Jerusalem who "hungers in the desert", or for the unmarried mother, for "The scorn'd and contemnd youthful girl, where shall she fly?" It is over such that Los rises:

> Putting on his golden sandals to walk from mountain to mountain,
> He takes his way, girding himself with gold & in his hand
> Holding his iron mace [1]

There is a note of urgency in the Shakespearian terseness with which he resolves to set out on his watch, to "plant / The seeds of Cities & of Villages in the Human bosom":

> The night falls thick: I go upon my watch: be attentive . . .
> Listen to your Watchmans voice: sleep not before the Furnaces
> Eternal Death stands at the door. O God pity our labours. [2]

Joining Los on his watch, we are invited to listen in to the lament of the Daughters of Albion; to listen in, for this is not a prepared statement but an unconnected and incoherent mixture of insights and errors, of perceptions, confusions and contradictions. There is a suggestion of senility at the beginning of their lament:

[1] ibid., 83. 76--78.

[2] ibid., 83. 61, 64--65.

Our Father Albions land: O it was a lovely land! & the Daughters of Beulah
Walked up and down in its green mountains: but Hand is fled
Away: & mighty Hyle: & after them Jerusalem is gone [1]

Yet in the middle of their confusion they perceive clearly the spiritual state of London, as depicted in the design on Plate 84, in his "distress & woe", as "blind & age-bent begging thro the Streets / Of Babylon, led by a child. his tears run down his beard". The child in the design points the way forward, directing London to the open door of a Gothic church, a building of humanity and artistic freedom. The Daughters cannot sustain their vision for long, and the appearance of Hand, "Marching thro Egypt in his fury", triggers an automatic response, and having once tasted Los's power, they desire to have it again that they may subdue Hand entirely to their jealous control once more:

But we woo him all night in songs, O Los come forth O Los
Divide us from these terrors & give us power them to subdue [2]

With this they are incorporated once again into the evil power of Rahab, and their momentary repentance is lost, "uniting into One / With Rahab as she turned the iron Spindle of destruction."

The work of mercy in the world, which sees that all

[1] ibid., 83. 85--87.

[2] ibid., 84. 25--26.

evil defeats its own purposes, takes the falsehood which Gwendolen still holds to, and shows it to be an analogy of the truth, so that when truly revealed, it:

> Became a Space & an Allegory around the Winding Worm.
> They namd it Canaan & built for it a tender Moon [1]

Canaan is the space which is necessary for Los's saving work of time to be accomplished. Bloom expresses this when he writes of this passage that "By bringing Reuben from his twelvefold wanderings" Los "is taking all the tribes, that is to say all men, out of their ordeal in the wilderness and planting them in the 'Divine Analogy' of the whole cycle of history." [2]

With this allegory of salvation successfully fashioned, Blake prepares us for one of the great turning points of the whole poem. The creation, which groaned under its heavy burden of vanity, grows silent in expectancy awaiting the Song of Los:

> And thus Los replies upon his Watch: the Valleys
> listen silent:
> The Stars stand still to hear: Jerusalem & Vala
> cease to mourn:
> His voice is heard from Albion: the Alps & Appenines
> Listen: Hermon & Lebanon bow their crowned heads [3]

[1] ibid., 85. 1--2.

[2] Bloom, op.cit., p. 424.

[3] Jerusalem 85. 14--17.

An ornamental leafy bough separates the Song from what goes before emphasizing the importance of the song as the beginning of the second main movement in the poem, the acceleration towards Albion's awakening and the reintegration of the whole of human activity in the life of imaginative perception. It is a song parallel to the Saviour's "mild song" which introduced Albion's stubborn rejection of humanity, only this time it comes from Los himself, and pity is given the opening to "join together those whom wrath has torn in sunder".[1] For the first time in the poem Los is able to achieve and maintain the beautiful serenity and confidence of tone which has characterized all the utterances of the Divine Vision and of the Eternals, signifying that Los has become one with Jesus in the uniting and saving power of pity. Essentially it is a song in praise of Jerusalem in which Los is enabled to see the apocalypse of St. John being realized before him:

> Thy Bosom white, translucent coverd with immortal gems
> A sublime ornament not obscuring the outlines of
> beauty
> Terrible to behold for thy extreme beauty & perfect-
> ion
> Twelve-fold here all the Tribes of Israel I behold
> Upon the Holy Land: I see the River of Life & Tree
> of Life
> I see the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven
> Between thy Wings of gold & silver featherd immortal
> Clear as the rainbow, as the cloud of the Suns
> tabernacle [2]

[1] ibid., 7. 62.

[2] ibid., 86. 14--21.

The imagery is drawn largely from the visions of Isaiah in Isaiah 6 and St. John in Revelation 21 and 22, and from the description of the garments of the priests in Exodus 28.

It is significant that at the very moment of his greatest triumph and achievement, Los should have to endure, like Jesus after the descent of the dove at his baptism, his most painful temptations, a time of great testing after his finest vision. Enitharmon, in a refusal of Los's dominion, "like a faint rainbow waved before him", no doubt in mockery of the appearance of the New Jerusalem earlier, "clear as the rainbow", and she lures him with her beauty until:

> She separated stood before him a lovely Female weeping
> Even Enitharmon separated outside, & his Loins closed [1]

Instead of offering her love in complete self-giving as before, she stands outside of him so that they envy each other "yet desiring, in all devouring Love".

Wicksteed is probably right to head this section of the poem, "The Necessity for Generation",[2] for Los recognizes that he cannot but confront the situation:

[1] ibid., 86. 57--58.

[2] Wicksteed, op.cit., p.234.

O lovely Enitharmon: I behold thy graceful forms
Moving beside me till intoxicated with the woven labyrinth
Of beauty & perfection my wild fibres shoot in veins
Of blood thro all my nervous limbs. [1]

Blake makes it clear, in the repelling of "weeping Enion blind & age-bent", that love which is merely a disguise for envying and devouring cruelty has to close its eyes to the reality of the tragic and pathetic figure on the design on Plate 87 of Enion as womanhood in general, having lost the beauty of youth with which to lure man, grasping hopelessly at the joys represented by the youthful Los and Enitharmon, stumbling in her unrewarded pursuit of happiness. Los's appeal to Enitharmon that they should unite to bring forth sons and daughters, "to live in thy Bosoms translucence as in an eternal morning", is rejected by Enitharmon who refuses a united relationship:

..... be thou assured I will never be thy slave
Let Mans delight be Love: but Womans delight be Pride. [2]

Her intention to weave the fibres of Los's being, "not as thou wilt but as I will", is the meaning of the design on Plate 85, where she is pictured apart from Los and seeking to fashion him to her own pattern, to keep him bound to her in possessive chains. The strife between them continues until Enitharmon challenges Los to decide

[1] Jerusalem 87. 3--6.

[2] Ibid., 87. 15--16.

between herself and Jerusalem, a choice which Los knows cannot be made in a fully integrated life, and which drives him to exert his authority:

> ..... While
> Jerusalem divides thy care: while thou carest for
> Jerusalem
> Know that I never will be thine [1]

Los's stern reply to Enitharmon on Plate 88, in which he opposes the pattern of relationship in eternity to that put forward by Enitharmon, the pattern of the female will, is necessary because the very unity which he has achieved, with his Spectre obeying his commands, and himself having become one with Jesus in pity for Albion, is at stake, for disunity between himself and his emanation cannot be isolated from other relationships:

> How then can I ever again be united as Man with Man
> While thou my Emanation refusest my Fibres of
> dominion? [2]

Even this fails to move Enitharmon from her newly made discovery of female power, and she opposes Los's words with her own pattern of secrecy and morality culminating in "God himself become a Male subservient to the Female".

The Spectre's enjoyment of this family dispute, with "their places of joy & love" become places of jealousy,

[1] ibid., 87. 20--22.

[2] ibid., 88. 12--13.

is heightened because it gives him his opportunity to reassert himself against Los, making Los a victim of Enitharmon's love and the Spectre's hate:

> The force of Los's Hammer is eternal Forgiveness; but
> His rage or his mildness were vain, she scatterd his love on the wind
> Eastward into her own Center, creating the Female Womb
> Im mild Jerusalem [1]

The repercussions of Enitharmon's jealousy are far-reaching, apparently undoing all of Los's earlier successes, for Jerusalem is absorbed once again into Vala, and takes from her the communion cup of poison, the vial of wrath which she is ready to pour out upon the earth. [2]

Plate 89, in its revelation of the Covering Cherub or Antichrist, contains, as Bloom rightly points out, "a consolidation of Blake's negative symbols, including Aaron's Zodiacal breastplate; a demonic opposite of the Resurrection (89.13) a perverted reflection of Eden; Egypt on the Gihon, that is, on a paradisal river fallen into the slavish Nile; the Sea of Rephaim, presumably the Red Sea with its shades of drowned Egyptians; the Minute Particulars in Egyptian bondage; Pharaoh; Leviathan as 'the Dragon of the River' (Ezekiel 29.3)." [3]

[1] ibid., 88. 50--53.

[2] Revelation 16. 1 ff.

[3] Erdman, p.861.

The plate begins by describing the permanently enduring "terrible indefinite Hermaphroditic form . . . Twelvefold in Allegoric pomp in selfish holiness", permanently enduring in the sense that it keeps on reappearing in different outward disguises, and Blake's purpose on this plate is to present this form in its completeness, that it may be pinned down once and for all, and be put off. The persistence of the Antichrist is remarkable in view of its having been "divided by the Cross & Nails & Thorns & Spear", for the apparent defeat of the crucifixion proved to be man's greatest victory, the great image of self-sacrifice. Just as Blake drew his imagery for the description of the threefold appearance of the New Jerusalem in Los's song on Plates 85 and 86 from the visions of Isaiah and St. John, so here, in his description of the threefold form of the Covering Cherub, Blake turns again to St. John and to Ezekiel. The figure is inspired by Ezekiel's description of the Prince of Tyre in Chapters 27 and 28, where Tyre is spoken of as "the anointed cherub that covereth." The Covering Cherub shares with Tyre the threefold deceit of arrogance in his beauty, beauty disguising evil, and evil claiming divinity. He is also "the Cherub at the Tree of Life",[1] the guardian of the Garden of Eden who prevents man's access to Paradise,[2] and is linked with the tabernacle, because of

[1] Jerusalem 14. 2.

[2] Genesis 3. 24.

the cherubim who were placed above the mercy-seat to cover it with their wings, again obstructing man's access to mercy and forgiveness:[1]

> Thus was the Covering Cherub reveald majestic image
> Of Selfhood, Body put off, the Antichrist accursed
> Coverd with precious stones, a Human Dragon terrible
> And bright, stretchd over Europe & Asia gorgeous [2]

The Cherub is in every way a parody of the Divine Humanity. He lives and thrives on death, for "In three nights he devourd the rejected corse of death", his brain contains a perverted reflection of Eden, with liberty replaced by slavery, and he absorbs and devours all who place their faith in war. This is why we now find Jerusalem absorbed into the very midst of the Cherub's devouring stomach, for when we last saw Jerusalem she was following Vala blindly, "In the thick cloud & darkness", as the latter "howld upon the winds in pride of beauty / Lamenting among the timbrels of the Warriors: among the Captives",[3] and in doing so she has joined the warriors and captives in being incorporated into the Covering Cherub:

> But it the midst of a devouring Stomach, Jerusalem
> Hidden within the Covering Cherub as in a Tabernacle
> Of threefold workmanship in allegoric delusion & woe.[4]

[1] Exodus 25. 20.

[2] Jerusalem 89. 9--12.

[3] ibid., 80. 6--7.

[4] ibid., 89. 43--45.

This is confirmed by the presence with her in the devouring stomach of the warlike "Seven Kings of Canaan" [1] "Five Baalim of Philistea", [2] and various other enemies of the people of God.

Following the conflicts of love and hate which we have witnessed between Los and his emanation and spectre, Blake reiterates on Plate 90 what the oneness of the Divine Family entails, for it is only in the free commingling of the masculine and the feminine, the sublime and the pathos, that complete integration can be effected, for if "no more the Masculine mingles / With the Feminine", as in the case of Los and his emanation, then:

> ..... the Sublime is shut out from the Pathos
> In howling torment, to build stone walls of separation,
> compelling
> The Pathos, to weave curtains of hiding secresy from
> the torment [3]

with the terrible revelations that were expressed in the description of the Covering Cherub.

The cutting of the fibres of Benjamin by Bowen and Conwenna, on the same plate, is an act of imperial expansion, of appropriating to themselves whatever they can conquer. This is to be interpreted in its widest sense,

[1] Deuteronomy 7. 1.

[2] Joshua 13. 3.

[3] Jerusalem 90. 11--13.

for as Sloss and Wallis point out, Bowen and Conwenna represent the Spectre and Emanation.[1] All the Sons of Albion follow their example, cutting the fibres of Luvah, devouring his "Life & eternal Form", while Hand, "In cruel pride", separates Reuben from the Hills of Surrey, forcing him to become a wanderer once again, and leaving his land desolate and bereft.

Los's prophetic speech in ll. 28--38 is spoken out of the wisdom he has acquired in his recent experiences with his emanation and spectre. His warning is twofold. It is first of all a call for the recognition of the absolute worth of the individual personality, for no-one should seek to model himself on another:

> Los cries: No Individual ought to appropriate to Himself
> Or to his Emanation, any of the Universal Characteristics
> Of David or of Eve, of the Woman, or of the Lord. [2]

This is exactly what the Sons of Albion do immediately Los has spoken, when "Mingling with Luvah in One. they become One Great Satan" losing their individuality in being assimilated into Luvah. At the same time Los's speech is an assertion that to affirm one's individuality in selfhood, in the selfish rejection of brotherhood which marked Albion's response to the Saviour,[3] is the negation

[1] Sloss and Wallis, op.cit., p. 621.

[2] Jerusalem 90. 28--30.

[3] ibid., 4. 26.

of community and as such, "Beyond the Outline of Identity";[1]

> Those who dare appropriate to themselves Universal Attributes
> Are the Blasphemous Selfhoods & must be broken asunder.[2]

Again Los's warning is ignored by the Sons of Albion who immediately act in direct opposition to Los:

> So Los cried in the Valleys of Middlesex in the Spirit of Prophecy
> While in Selfhood Hand & Hyle & Bowen & Skofeld appropriate
> The Divine Names: seeking to Vegetate the Divine Vision[3]

Los ends with a call to Jesus to come and "take on thee the Satanic Body of Holiness", just as he has done before, for Satan cannot assimilate Christ, whereas Christ in taking upon himself the Satanic body can conquer it, cast it off, and raise up a "Spiritual Risen Body".

Los's words provoke the giant Sons of Albion to reveal themselves for what they really are, strengthening their desire to destroy both Albion and Los:

> Denying in private: mocking God & Eternal Life: & in Public
> Collusion, calling themselves Deists, Worshipping the Maternal
> Humanity; calling it Nature, and Natural Religion[4]

[1] ibid., 18. 3.

[2] ibid., 90. 32--33.

[3] ibid., 90. 39--41.

[4] ibid., 90. 64--66.

Los's reply on Plate 91 is triumphant and yet calm, the product, in Bloom's words, of "internal conflict never evaded, and poetic insight absolutely disciplined."[1] It is evidence of Los's growth in consciousness that he can speak with such wisdom, confidence and composure, at the moment of greatest opposition. It is this which prompts Bloom to call it "Blake's supreme dramatic speech."[2] Los's purpose is to expose the hypocrisy of religion hiding envy and strife, by completely bringing his Spectre under his control:

> ..... Go to these Friends of Righteousness
> Tell them to obey their Humanities, & not pretend
> Holiness [3]

His speech here is perhaps the most complete statement of his humanism which Blake has given us, advocating a worship of God which is to honour man's gifts, according to his genius, "which is the Holy Ghost in Man", for:

> He who would see the Divinity must see him in his
> Children
> One first, in friendship & love; then a Divine Family,
> & in the midst
> Jesus will appear; so he who wishes to see a Vision;
> a perfect Whole
> Must see it in its Minute Particulars; Organized [4]

[1] Bloom, op.cit., p. 426.

[2] Erdman, p. 861.

[3] Jerusalem 91. 4--5.

[4] ibid., 91. 18--21.

Progression in Jerusalem is continually through the interplay of contraries, constantly resolving, but constantly taking new forms, and Los clearly implies that this must be so, for poetry, like friendship, can only be forged "By severe contentions of friendship & the burning fire of thought."

Los's speech completely subdues the Spectre, though not immediately, for the latter attempts one last temptation to put Los's new-found confidence to the test, "Repeating the Smaragdine Table of Hermes to draw Los down / Into the Indefinite". Los has articulated his perceptions in the most minute particulars, and with the clearest outlines, and the Spectre knows that his only hope is to find room to manoeuvre by drawing Los back into the indefinite. To do this, he offers Los the obviously persuasive and attractive words of the central work of occult tradition, but Los recognizes it as a pretence of the spiritual to entrap him, and refuses its attractions. It is the spectrous taking the disguise of the spiritual. With this the Spectre is overcome and taken captive, with great pain to Los himself for it involves "strict severity self-subduing". The design on Plate 91 seems intended to keep to the forefront at this time of Los's greatest struggle and victory, the situation of Albion, for whose sake Los endures such conflicts, for we see Albion stretched out on the ground, with, as Kathleen Raine suggests, the symbols of the

"externalization of his universe from fallen man. The emblem on the right appears to be an ear of corn, emblem of vegetation; on the left the seal of Solomon which 'stamps with solid form.'" [1]

The beginning of Plate 92 bears witness to the continuing movement towards unity on the part of mankind, which ironically has been so successfully but so suicidally imitated by the forces of Antichrist in the figure of the Covering Cherub. For the first time, following the impact of Los's song on Plates 85 and 86, where he achieved oneness with the Saviour in a fuller way than before, Albion shows no rejection of the coming together of mankind in brotherhood:

> What do I see? The Briton Saxon Roman Norman
> In my Furnaces into One amalgamating Nation the English: taking refuge
> In the Loins of Albion. [2]

This is not the sudden and unexplained about-turn which Stevenson and others have claimed it to be.[3] It is part of the process which Los, as representative of the artist working in time, has set in motion through his achievement, after many struggles, of a poetic form which is effective to bridge the gulf of folly and unrelatedness which has

[1] Raine, Blake and Tradition, vol.II, p. 257. See Europe 2. 8.

[2] Jerusalem 92. 1--3.

[3] "Blake's Jerusalem", Essays in Criticism, 9 (1959), 254--64.

separated Albion from his true humanity. It is in his capturing of the spirit of the Saviour's pity and mildness that Los is enabled to move Albion towards the unity of nations once again.

The theme of Los and Enitharmon does not fade out, as Stevenson suggests,[1] though he is right to point out that "she realizes that what has begun to show in Albion is a power too great for her female will to dominate."[2] This is in fact the culmination of Los's struggle with Enitharmon, for she expresses her fear that her present separated existence as a female will, exerting her dominion over man, will come to an end:

> The Poets Song draws to its period & Enitharmon is no more.
> For if he be that Albion I can never weave him in my Loom [3]

Los simply agrees with her and fittingly does not pursue the matter, for both recognize the truth:

> ..... Sexes must vanish & cease
> To be, when Albion arises from his dread repose
> O lovely Enitharmon [4]

A new unity of male and female is inevitable once Albion is awakened from his bondage to error.

[1] Stevenson, The Poems of Blake, p. 793.

[2] ibid., p. 829.

[3] Jerusalem 92. 8--9.

[4] ibid., 92. 13--14.

The main impact of Plate 92 is in its depiction of Jerusalem, lamenting in the devouring stomach of the Covering Cherub, surrounded by Druidic trilithons, and all that is opposed to the work of Los:

> Amalek, Edom, Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Ashur, Philistea,
> around Jerusalem
> Where the Druids reard their Rocky Circles to make
> permanent Remembrance
> Of Sin. & the Tree of Good & Evil sprang from the
> Rocky Circle & Snake
> Of the Druid, along the Valley of Rephaim from
> Camberwell to Golgotha
> And framed the Mundane Shell Cavernous in Length
> Bredth & Highth [1]

Aware that her dominion over Los is at an end, Enitharmon turns her attention to her sons, appealing for their love in order that she might assert a maternal control over them, and hold them bound to her will:

> Could you Love me Rintrah, if you Pride not in my
> Love
> As Reuben found Mandrakes in the field & gave them
> to his Mother [2]

Los deals calmly with this attempt to divert his sons from their labours with him, and reminds them that all the effects of the Satanic influence of "Bacon, Newton, Locke" are but "that Signal of the Morning which was told us in the beginning", and which he has already witnessed in his furnaces. The three accusers of Socrates, pictured in the design at the top of Plate 93, are likened to the

[1] ibid., 92. 23--27.

[2] ibid., 93. 7--8.

accusers of Jesus, and by extension, to Bacon, Newton and Locke, propogators of a Deistic religion, involving the worship of "The God of This World, & the Goddess Nature / Mystery Babylon the Great". In answering his sons, Los makes the unity between himself and Jesus at this point very clear, speaking with authority, taking upon himself the "Satanic Body of Holiness" which only the Christ is able to do, and promising that his sons will share in their unity, for "We shall not Die! we shall be united in Jesus". Once again the design at the foot of this plate returns our attention to the plight of Jerusalem, in the form of the reclining female figure, and Los's assurance fittingly corresponds to the fact that she has already begun to rise from her tomb, as if to listen to the confident words of Los, words that have begun to take on some of the life-giving power of Ezekiel's words in the valley among the dead bodies. Los's words have already imparted a measure of life to Albion, and now they have the same effect on his sons and on Jerusalem.

Plate 94 begins, however, by making it clear that what Los has seen in his furnaces is not yet visible to all, for:

> Albion cold lays on his Rock: storms & snows beat round him.
> Beneath the Furnaces & the starry Wheels & the Immortal Tomb

Howling winds cover him: roaring seas dash furious
against him [1]

Nor is England yet seen as the united form of the nations, but as "a Female Shadow", and the "Body of Albion" remains "closed apart from all Nations." This is the scene depicted on the lower design on Plate 94, where Albion is seen lying upon his rock, with England stretched out above him, but with the sun rising behind the landscape of rocky Druidic desolation. Whereas Los sees Albion already renewed to life, some still see no prospect of revival, and eagerly await Albion's complete fall into Eternal Death:

Over them the famishd Eagle screams on boney Wings
and around
Them howls the Wolf of famine [2]

Los's faithfulness to his great task, though, has not been in vain, and it is at the very moment when Albion appears closest to being devoured by those who would prey upon him that the Divine Breath finds a response. England, who earlier divided into Jerusalem and Vala,[3] awakes first, a Lady Macbeth stricken with grief at her crime of having murdered Albion "with the Knife of the Druid". All the Daughters of Albion, together with Jerusalem, Vala and Enitharmon, come together in this repentant figure of England.

1 ibid., 94. 1--3.

2 ibid., 94. 15--16.

3 ibid., 32. 28.

England's awakening draws a similar response from Albion, and as is shown in the design on Plate 95, the giant figure arises, and immediately reveals himself to be a man of prophetic strength and majesty as "into the Heavens he walked clothed in flames / Loud thundring, with broad flashes of flaming lightning & pillars / Of fire, speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms". His first task is to restore the Zoas to their proper functions, but he finds Urthona already at work, drawing from Blake a tribute to each artist who works on faithfully without counting the cost too great:

> Therefore the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre
> in songs
> Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble.[1]

The reuniting of Albion with himself prepares the way for the great reunifying of Albion with England:

> As the Sun & Moon lead forward the Visions of Heaven
> & Earth
> England who is Brittannia enterd Albions bosom
> rejoicing [2]

Bloom suggests quite rightly that on Plate 96 "the essential humanism of this apocalypse is revealed." [3] Jesus, the Good Shepherd, appears before Albion in the form of a man, and Albion soon realizes that "the Divine

[1] ibid., 95. 19--20.

[2] ibid., 95. 21--22.

[3] Bloom, op.cit., p. 431.

Appearance was the likeness & similitude of Los". Freely opening his heart to the Saviour, Albion likens his selfhood to the armies of Israel, marching to war in the pride of their possession of the moral law, fittingly taking themselves "Into the Wilderness of Judah". Events now begin to move quickly, but each is carefully prepared for. Just as Los's growth in consciousness, and his willingness to evade none of the necessary conflicts and struggles, laid the way for Albion to be reawakened, so now each step in Albion's progression towards a full awareness is put to the test by events in which he is refined and prepared for complete unity with Jesus in his sacrifice. Albion's appeal to the Saviour for fear of his approaching selfhood is answered not by its immediate defeat, but by the promise of resurrection through suffering:

> Jesus replied Fear not Albion unless I die thou canst not live
> But if I die I shall arise again & thou with me
> This is Friendship & Brotherhood without it Man is Not
> So Jesus spoke: the Covering Cherub coming on in darkness
> Overshadowd them & Jesus said Thus do Men in Eternity
> One for another to put off by forgiveness, every sin [1]

Albion's fear for the safety of his redeemer has led to the appearance of the Covering Cherub overshadowing them, and dividing them, which in turn provokes an even greater self-forgetfulness on Albion's part, when "Self was lost in the contemplation of faith / And wonder at the Divine

[1] Jerusalem 96. 14--19.

Mercy & at Los's sublime honour", prompting him to cast himself into the furnaces of self-sacrifice, which become the "Fountains of Living Waters" of Revelation 21.6 and Ezekiel 47. 9. This final step in Albion's growth towards consciousness leads to his complete restoration as man:

> ..... Then Albion stood before Jesus in the Clouds
> Of Heaven Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity [1]

In the language and spirit of the Song of Solomon, Albion calls on Jerusalem to awake and come away with him, and to "overspread all Nations as in Ancient Time". As if to prepare the nations for the restoration of Jerusalem to her position of former centrality, Albion reaches into infinitude and takes his bow. The bow speaks of a reintegrated community, each part working in harmony, to speed the arrows of intellect between man and man, in the "severe contentions of friendship & the burning fire of thought", which Los spoke of earlier. The image of the bow is particularly apt to represent the fierce mental warfare of the New Jerusalem:

> And the Bow is a Male & Female & the Quiver of the Arrows of Love,
> Are the Children of this Bow: a Bow of Mercy & Loving-kindness laying
> Open the hidden Heart in Wars of mutual Benevolence Wars of Love [2]

[1] ibid., 96. 42--43.

[2] ibid., 97. 12--14.

An integrated community is a community of integrated persons, for the bow is fourfold, the product of the united action of the four Zoas.

Wicksteed perceptively remarks on the reversal of Los's symbolical attitude on the Frontispiece of Jerusalem, here in the design on Plate 97. [1] Still with his right foot forward, Los advances not into the world of death, but into the world of the life of eternity, bearing not a lamp for his feet to lighten the way, but carrying the sun of artistic creation, and shielding his eyes from the fierce light of Albion's new state, reawakened to eternal life.

The united action of male and female, extended to cover the whole earth by the cosmic imagery of Plate 98, signals and achieves the complete destruction of the "Druid Spectre" in Fourfold Annihilation". Set free from his errors, man is ready for the mental warfare of Eden, a warfare of love:

> The innumerable Chariots of the Almighty appeard in Heaven
> And Bacon & Newton & Locke, & Milton & Shakspear & Chaucer [2]

Blake's vision of the redeemed life is the apotheosis of

[1] Wicksteed, op.cit., p. 245.

[2] Jerusalem 98. 8--9.

man, for each man bears within himself the four Living Creatures of Ezekiel's vision, whose task it was to bear the divinity through the world, and each man possesses the fulness of vision which was the mark of the divinity in Ezekiel 1.18, for:

> ..... every Man stood Fourfold. each Four Faces had.
> One to the West
> One toward the East One to the South One to the North.
> the Horses Fourfold
> And the dim Chaos brightend beneath, above, around!
> Eyed as the Peacock [1]

In describing the restoration of true religion, Blake contrasts "the Covenant of Jehovah" with "the Covenant of Priam". True Christianity consists in the former, in "Forgiveness of Sins which is Self-Annihilation". Bloom's note on the "Covenant of Priam" in his commentary highlights the distinction between the true and the false. Priam's Covenant, Bloom suggests, "is at once the Classical vision of virtue as belonging foremost to the warrior, and the poetic art founded upon that vision."[2] This antithesis is expanded in the powerful expression of the mental exchanges which take place among the redeemed, the passage itself in 11. 28--53 an illustration of these exchanges. The dwellers in Eden converse together in "Visionary forms dramatic" which Karl Kiralis suggests are 'Visionary' since "the old classical, religious, and philosophical

[1] ibid., 98. 12--14.

[2] Erdman, p. 862.

symbolism had for Blake become too closely associated with the shadowy world, the world of death, Ulro." [1] They are dramatic because of the principle of progression through the dialectical struggle of contraries which, as we have seen, is still the means of progression in Eden.

Blake's description of the poetry of Eden is of great importance for its obvious relevance to his own intentions in Jerusalem:

> And they conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic which bright
> Redounded from their Tongues in thunderous majesty, in Visions
> In new Expanses, creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect
> Creating Space, Creating Time according to the wonders Divine
> Of Human Imagination, throughout all the Three Regions immense
> Of Childhood, Manhood & Old Age; & the all tremendous unfathomable Non Ens
> Of Death was seen in regenerations terrific or complacent varying
> According to the subject of discourse & every Word & Every Character
> Was Human according to the Expansion or Contraction, the Translucence or
> Opakeness of Nervous fibres such was the variation of Time & Space
> Which vary according as the Organs of Perception vary & they walked
> To & fro in Eternity as One Man reflecting each in each & clearly seen
> And seeing: according to fitness & order. [2]

Blake's dramatic and visionary poetry, the purpose of which

[1] "The Theme and Structure of William Blake's Jerusalem", English Literary History, 23 (1956), 127--43, p. 130.

[2] Jerusalem 98. 28--40.

is to open up new and undiscovered expanses within man himself, creates exemplars which arouse both the memory and the intellect to action, depending on the degree of forcefulness of the exemplar, and which demonstrates what it is to interpret time and space not in terms of mortality, but in terms of the imagination, freeing history from the limitations of mere recording, and opening up the possibility of poetic transformation. All of this is dependent upon the perceptions of the reader or hearer, as the design on this plate may be intended to show. Every living thing must be seen in human terms, even the serpent, worm, frog and spider of Blake's design, for each has a place in the restored order. Such poetry is not the work of the isolated prophet, but must become each man's response to the other, in the true community of the "One Man", where the non-entities or negations of the world of death have been regenerated into living forms. The vitality of Blake's poetry in this passage is an attempt to achieve the goal of the words of the poet borne on "Chariots of gold & jewels", drawn by Ezekiel's Living Creatures, exalting humanity in the gospel of forgiveness.

Fittingly the song of Jerusalem ends on what Bloom calls the note of "pure serenity," even in the midst of the "eternal alternation of contrary states": [1]

[1] Bloom, op.cit., p. 433.

..... all
Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied
Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing
And then Awaking into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality. [1]

This is the unity which is shown in the design on Plate 99 where the divine figure of Albion embraces Jerusalem his emanation in the midst of the flames of fiery action. The final line of the poem sets it firmly in the tradition of the prophetic book, with Ezekiel as the model, whose book ends with the emphasis on the reality of all things made new:

and the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there. [2]

Blake identifies himself and his artistic purpose with Ezekiel in his similar ending:

And I heard the Name of their Emanations they are named Jerusalem [3]

The final plate of Jerusalem bears witness to the fact that many of Blake's images in the poem are images of action and of work. Man's salvation is achieved through creative work, as the central figure of Los testifies, with his instruments of labour, his hammer and

[1] Jerusalem 99. 1--4.

[2] Ezekiel 48. 35.

[3] Jerusalem 99. 5.

tongs to break down all that becomes inhumanly hard and opaque, and to forge forms of brotherhood. Los's fellow labourers, working in spite of the coiling embraces of the serpent temple, are male and female, the male carrying the sun of time, the female "Weaving the Web of life",[1] the three figures uniting in a trinity of human creativity.

[1] ibid., 83. 73.

CHAPTER VII.

Concluding.

In drawing conclusions from this thesis, I propose, rather than systematically summarising each chapter, to select those aspects which seem to me to contribute most to our further understanding of Blake's achievement in Jerusalem.

As my review of critical studies of the poem revealed, Blake's early reputation depended almost entirely on the early poems, with the dichotomy of the poet of the lyrical poems, natural and lucid, and the prophet of the later books, extravagant and obscure. With increasing explication of and attention to the minute particulars of Jerusalem, there is much less emphasis on the obscurity and formlessness of the poem, though the assumptions remain that its organization is fragmented and unclear and its poetry harsh and undisciplined. I have tried to show in this thesis that the difficulty of Jerusalem has been much overstated, as has been emphasized by several of the poem's wisest commentators. Harold Bloom points out that "Blake's Jerusalem is less difficult than it first seems, even to the informed reader, but it still is difficult",[1] echoing

[1] "Blake's Jerusalem : The Bard of Sensibility and the Form of Prophecy", p.7.

Karl Kiralis's "hope of showing that the prophetic books are not as difficult to read as many seem to believe." [1]

I have suggested that studies of the structure of Jerusalem have so far proved unsatisfactory to varying degrees, in that they lead to the imposition of a formal principle on a largely resistant poem. Instead, I have tried to discuss the structure as an integral part of the poem's central concerns, themes, images, and parallelistic organization. The eighty-ninth plate, with its unambiguous revelation of the Covering Cherub, has generally been seen as the turning-point of the poem in that it represents the culmination of the suicidal consolidation of Albion's enemies, leading directly to the restoration of imaginative community. While this plate is undoubtedly crucial to the poem's development, I suggest that the real turning-point of the poem comes earlier than this in the Song of Los on Plates eighty-five and eighty-six. [2] Here Los achieves the task he was set by the Saviour of abstaining from wrath and replacing it with pity; a creative pity which opens up for Albion the possibility of renewal. I also have suggested that claims of Blake's use of a deus ex machina to bring about a resolution of the poem are not only misleading

[1] "A Guide to the Intellectual Symbolism of William Blake's Later Prophetic Writings", p.190.

[2] Jerusalem 85. 22--86. 32.

but greatly underestimate Blake's design in Jerusalem. Blake carefully prepares for the renewal of Albion in at least four ways. First, there is the turning-point of the Song of Los, as I have just suggested. Second, there is the suicidal consolidation of evil in the figure of the Covering Cherub, enabling him to be recognized and rejected, culminating the increasingly self-defeating nature of negative forces. Third, there is the realization in actuality of self-knowledge both in Los and in the reader who is invited to participate in the action of the poem, and fourth, the motivating power of creative work, in that the poem's central images are images of work and of action. Interpreting the movement of the poem in these terms led to a completely new reading of many of the plates, especially the fourth plate, with the Saviour's "mild song", the plates concerning Reuben in the second chapter, the frontispiece to Chapter Three, showing the pitiable figures of Vala, Hyle, and Scofield, and almost all the plates in Chapters Three and Four, with their progression towards the poem's resolution.

I have also studied the structure in terms of its relationship to the Book of Ezekiel, attempting to show that the similarity in structure is not in Blake's adoption of an abstract principle from Ezekiel, but grows spontaneously out of Blake's conviction of a strong sense of identity between himself and Ezekiel in terms of his

own situation, his people's situation, and the purpose of his work. Both books are tightly organized. The fourfold structure of Ezekiel corresponds clearly to the fourfold division of Jerusalem in a way that I have hoped reveals a deliberate use of Ezekiel as a model on Blake's part. This study of the structure involved discussing the addressees of each chapter, the dialectical progression within each, and the corresponding division in the Book of Ezekiel. The parallelistic organization of Jerusalem is clearly related to Robert Lowth's influential eighteenth-century work on parallelism in the Old Testament Scriptures. I also suggested that Blake's second chapter, "To the Jews", seems to some extent to draw consciously on the Biblical epistle "To The Hebrews", in that each attempts to reinterpret Biblical history in terms of a new revelation.

This analysis of the structure of Jerusalem is closely linked with my study of stylistic similarities between the poem and Ezekiel's book, in that the central conflict between pity and wrath is an important factor in determining the poem's structure and also governs Blake's choice of poetic styles. Concensus agreement among Blake's readers has generally suggested either that the poem suffers from the harshness and ugliness of the poetry, or that such ugliness is necessary to incarnate the reality of a fallen world. I have suggested three fundamen-

tal objections to this description of the poetry. First, as I said earlier the conflict between pity and wrath, and the need for Los to learn pity, and reject wrath, necessitates a much less clamorous and noisy style than is often claimed. Second, the Saviour's "mild song", significantly placed at the beginning of the poem, acts as a model for the poet, and is finally affirmed as the poetic style which Los must achieve. Third, a progression in the narrative is most often achieved when a poetic form similar to the Saviour's mild song is achieved, most clearly revealed in the calls to the Saviour which end the first and second chapters. The fifty-fifth plate of the poem provides an interesting microcosm of the movement of the poem as a whole in its progression through loudness and clamour to peace and serenity. These considerations led me to suggest not that Jerusalem is never rugged, but that insufficient attention has been paid to the diversity of poetic styles which Blake employs, and the design which determines his use of them. It needs to be emphasized, however, that Blake clearly distinguishes in his poem between creative forms of pity and wrath, and their uncreative and selfish forms.

In discussing the similarities between the style of Ezekiel's book and Jerusalem, I hope to have shown that Blake makes extensive use of Ezekiel for his own purposes.

He adapts much of his imagery from Ezekiel, imagery that was still part of a living tradition, and which has the qualities of being particularly vivid and visual. Internalizing and mythologizing Ezekiel's visions, Blake adapts the language of eschatology metaphorically. Blake's adaptations from Ezekiel signify a similarity of temperament and of imaginative power, in that each has a thoroughly inclusive imagination, making use of all that comes to hand.

With regard to the text of the poem, I accepted the conclusions of D.V. Erdman's research on the text, contributing to this a brief elaboration of Michael Phillips's suggestion concerning the rearranged order of plates in the second chapter. The point that Blake may have reordered his poem in order to make it more immediately visually attractive for the sake of finding a customer for it is one which deserves more consideration.

I briefly examined the epic and prophetic context of Jerusalem, finding that the poem has affinities with the English epic tradition in its desire for fulness of scope and universality of range in its design. It attempts to reshape human history in terms of the basic images of heaven and hell, attempting to reveal the traditions which have shaped civilization and pointing towards its renewal. Jerusalem identifies itself at the

outset with the epic tradition in calling for the reader's participation in the poem. Jerusalem particularly shares with the Aeneid the desire to reveal history as progression and to show, as in Biblical history, the supreme significance of the historical moment. It is closely linked in spirit, as Frye suggests, with Piers Plowman. The setting of Langland's poem is at once localized and universalized, as in Jerusalem, and there is correspondence in the situation of worldliness which Holy Church reveals. Piers can be seen as a Los-figure, directing towards the twofold goal of the balanced individual, directed by Langland's Zoas of reason and conscience, and of the nation seen as a community. Langland's emphasis on the visual in his revisions from A to C passus, the tough particularizing which his text undergoes, and his poem's rhythmical movements in longer units, are points of correspondence with Blake, whose spiritual closeness to the spirit of the medieval epic is clear too in his fusion of public and personal themes, his reaction to social corruption, and his distinctness from the tradition of introspection, as evidenced in the growing introspection of Albion's speeches through the poem as he falls deeper and deeper into isolation, with monologue increasingly replacing dialogue. Finally, following Milton, Blake desired to write a national, religious epic for his own age, attempting to unite his own vision with the image of man in the Bible, creating a new image of the total process of life

from the fall to the new Jerusalem.

In uniting his epic and prophetic aspirations, Blake first rejected the rational, traditional view of prophecy as prediction of the future, and second, the common assumption that obscurity had a part to play in either prophecy or the sublime. I found that obscurity was no part of Blake's design in Jerusalem, despite claims of several commentators to the contrary. Blake turned to the Biblical prophets for an integrating mythology to destroy dualisms, and to their understanding of history as the locus of moments of cosmic importance. The image of the isolated prophet, willing to endure and to stand alone, was particularly dear to Blake, as he sought to achieve what he saw as the true function of prophecy, to bring about a reintegration of national life, warning against the danger of the collapse of national identity. Finally, he sought to bring sanity to millenarian speculation, internalizing and universalizing the literal expectations of the prophets of a new Jerusalem on earth.

This last point leads us back again to the relationship between Jerusalem and Ezekiel, for Ezekiel was an important source for many of the millenarian expectations of Blake's time, as is shown by Richard Brothers's detailed portrayal of the prophet's plans for the new Jerusalem. Ezekiel has a history of being searched for prophecies

whose literal fulfilment would demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Like Jerusalem, I have shown that Ezekiel was seen as a book lacking in design and coherent form, full of vehemence and passion, in which the orator replaces the poet. In contrast to such views, I suggested that Ezekiel, like Blake, employs a variety of poetic styles, reveals much premeditated design in his concern with the minute details of his book, and adopts his images from other writings, revivifying them in incorporating them into his own vision.

I have emphasized the sense of identity which Blake felt with Ezekiel, the captive, exiled prophet, his people separated from their holy city of Jerusalem, like Albion, separated from the Jerusalem of social and artistic liberty, and again like Albion, separated from their prophet and guide. Like Ezekiel, Blake's vision is one which bestows life on nature, and in its affirmation of action, reveals a concern with renewal in terms of a common national, cultural, and religious life. At the same time, Harold Bloom is undoubtedly right when he points out that in the endings of the two books, "we confront an identity straining to be dissolved." [1] Blake's ending is less final than Ezekiel's, where the name of the new city is changed to "The Lord is there." Blake's city keeps the name of Jerusalem. The activity of his

[1] Bloom, op.cit., p.20.

poem must continue for the purging of the land is never something finally accomplished. It continues as part of the mental warfare which characterizes Eden, for as Denis Donoghue writes, "The idiom of harmony and reconciliation is alien to Promethean imaginations, which delight rather in tension and struggle, the exercise of will." Blake "assumes responsibility for the war, lest a deadly peace result from inertia."[1] In an age, unlike Ezekiel's, where values have become questionable and uncertain, the poet must become much more concerned with his own role, and more aware of the unending work of the imagination to create a human form out of the fallenness of the self and of the natural world.

[1] Thieves of Fire, 1973, p.62.

APPENDIX.

In an article published too late for reference to it to be included within the body of the thesis, Randel Helms has examined the relationship between Ezekiel and Jerusalem, finding that "Truculent visionary that he was, Blake most often used Ezekiel less as source than as sounding board." [1]

Helms extends some of Harold Bloom's suggestions about the influence of Ezekiel on Jerusalem, pointing to "the force of strikingly recast allusions to Ezekiel", as in the imagery of the wheel, and Golgonooza as Blake's version of Ezekiel's temple. In this he makes the valuable point that "the differences are more important than the similarities", for in Ezekiel the eastern gate of the temple is closed[2], whereas in Golgonooza, "The Western Gate Fourfold is clos'd".[3] The significance of the change, Helms writes, lies in the fact that Eden lies westward in Blake's mythic geography, and Albion's fallenness has closed Eden to him, leaving open Babylon, to the east.

Helms's study is less helpful in his repeated and confusing comparison of Ezekiel's judgments with

1. "Ezekiel and Blake's Jerusalem," Studies in Romanticism, 13, No.2 (Spring 1974), 127-40.

2. Ezekiel 44. 1-2.

3. Jerusalem 13. 6.

the false judgments of the Sons of Albion in Jerusalem, as when he writes that "Ezekiel's righteous condemnation of Jerusalem becomes in Blake an ironic condemnation of the accusers themselves",[1] and "Ezekiel's accusations of whoredom are accurate, but Albion's Sons' outcries are not: indeed her "harlotry" of liberty is exactly what Blake desires of her." [2] It is more helpful to maintain the comparison of Blake's Sons of Albion with Ezekiel's "children of Israel." [3]

Helms's study of the similarities in structure between the two works deserves examination. Although "One could hardly say that Jerusalem is clearly arranged",[4] he finds that Jerusalem follows the threefold division of Ezekiel's book. The latter consists of Chapters 1-24, one half of the book depicting the doom of Israel and the adultery of Jerusalem, corresponding to the first half of Jerusalem, Chapters One and Two, presenting the fall of Albion and the separation of the "harlot" Jerusalem from two different perspectives. Blake's third chapter, revealing Albion's "Eternal Death" in a state of Deism, presents "war on earth", just as Ezekiel's second section presents the Day of the

1. Helms, op. cit., p.131.
2. ibid., p.134.
3. ibid., p.130.
4. ibid., p.133.

Lord coming in war against Israel's enemies. The restored temple of Ezekiel corresponds to "the resuscitation of Liberty" in Jerusalem.

Several objections might be made against Helms's suggestions. First, the two opening chapters of Jerusalem do not "end at the same point".[1] Albion, freed from "the imputation of Sin" as desired at the end of Chapter One, still needs to be released from "the remembrance of Sin" at the end of Chapter Two, for false self-condemnation blinds him to his real problems. Second, the separation of Jerusalem from Albion, with her journey to Babylon "a saving purgation", appears not so much part of any "ultimate divine plan behind Jerusalem's exile" in Jerusalem, but rather, as with Jerusalem's downfall in Ezekiel, an inescapable present reality which confronts the poet, and which he must, as artist, turn to serving the end of ultimate redemption. Third, Helms's claim that Los's work of building Golgonooza "begins in earnest after Plate 55, when Los has an experience directly based on Isaiah's inaugural vision"[2] turns out to be rather arbitrary in that Los has accepted his commissioning from the beginning of the poem, and has been working throughout on his great task,

1. ibid., p.134.
2. ibid., p.138.

and it also ignores the conflict of pity and wrath which recurs in the poem. Otherwise, Helms's threefold structure, while containing a number of valuable insights, does not seem to me an advance on a fourfold structure.

Finally, Helms's claim that "though as visionaries, Blake and Ezekiel were one, as moralists, they were worlds apart"[1] has much truth, but rather than claim that "Blake is unable to follow Ezekiel in the means of restoration, and its functions once restored" of the new city, it might be more apt to point out that Blake shows no particular concern at all with the details of Ezekiel's priestly temple, as if he preferred not to separate himself too much from the earlier prophet. While it is true that Blake, as Helms writes, desired "intellectual warfare" with Ezekiel, the poet's attitude in Jerusalem is to concentrate on those aspects which unite him with the Biblical prophet, and to ignore, as far as possible, their clear moral differences.

1. ibid., p.139.

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